

# Mack Mason declares for Union County Sheriff



**Mack Mason**

Greetings friends and fellow Union Countians.

I would like to take this opportunity to announce my candidacy for Sheriff in the Union County Republican Primary to be held July 31, 2012 and tell you about myself and some of my qualifications for this office.

I have lived in Union County for most of my life. My parents were Ernest and Louise Mason, who were born and raised in Banks County,

Homer, GA. When I was 7 years old, we moved to Union County where I was enrolled in the Union County school system until I graduated from Union County High in 1970. I have one brother, Gene Mason, who owns and operates Mason's Machine Shop here in Blairsville. I am married to the former Rhonda Rice whose parents are Ernest and Nell Rice of Blairsville.

My background in law enforcement began with the Georgia State Patrol (GSP) soon after graduation from high school. Shortly after I was hired by the GSP, I was drafted and served two years in the United States Army.

While at Fort Gordon, GA, I graduated from the Military Police School and also from the Military Corrections School. While stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky with the 553rd Military Police Company, I did extensive work within the military prison system, which I feel will be invaluable in the proper operation of the Union County Jail for both the local citizens and those incarcerated. After an honorable discharge from the Army, I returned to duty with the State Patrol, was promoted to Trooper and assigned to Post 6, Gainesville, GA. Other duty

stations with the State Patrol include Post 7, Toccoa, and I spent the last 18 years of my career at Post 27, Blue Ridge, which covered Union, Towns, Fannin and Gilmer Counties. I retired with over 29 years of service with the GSP.

At numerous times during my law enforcement career I was sent to locations throughout the State of Georgia to assist local officials with a myriad of law enforcement problems including civil disturbances and unrest, floods, and tornadoes, etc. I feel this background gives me a unique blend of law enforcement experiences that will aid in dealing with situations unrelated to routine criminal enforcement, when and if similar problems should occur here in Union County.

During the mid 1980s, in my off duty time, I attended off campus classes through Truett McConnell College and earned an Associate's Degree. I feel that I am well qualified, goal oriented and disciplined enough to face the challenges of running the Sheriff's Office and County Jail, along with providing the leadership for the deputies and staff with the accountability owed to the citizens of Union County.

I am humbled by the

chance to a servant in this high office. The encouragement of so many people I have known, trusted and respected for the biggest part of my life is the "driving force" of this endeavor. I hereby offer my candidacy for Sheriff of Union County in order to serve and protect the people, their families and property.

I realize it is impossible to meet every voter between now and the election, but I am working hard and striving to meet as many of you as I possibly can in order to hear your concerns and discuss issues that you may have questions about. I am now, and intend to remain fully accessible and accountable as a candidate. When I am elected the operations of the Sheriff's Office "Will Always Be Transparent."

If any person or group would like to meet with me, I can be contacted by phone at 706-994-4213 or by e-mail at mackmason2012@yahoo.com, or Mack Mason for Sheriff, P.O. Box 37, Blairsville, GA 30514. Harry Burgess is the treasurer of the Mack Mason for Sheriff Campaign. Harry's address is 116 Leah's Lane, Blairsville, GA 30512.

Thank you for your consideration.

## Rich declares for Union Commissioner



**Charles Rich**

Hello everyone. My name is Charles Rich and I would like to formally announce my candidacy for Union County Commissioner on the Republican ticket. I am a Union County resident and businessman and have decided it is time to give back to a community I have known and loved since I was a young boy.

As your next County Commissioner, with my commitment to honesty and integrity, I believe I am the best candidate to bring much needed change to Union County. I am not a politician, merely a very hard working man that wants to ensure this county stays as great as it is.

In today's tough economic times I know that it is absolutely imperative to cut unnecessary spending and focus on essential services. With my background and experience managing and being responsible for a tri-state total loss program made up of over 50 separate businesses, I will work to implement common sense initiatives that help control property taxes and county spending. I will also ensure a balanced budget and work towards initiating a contingency fund. I want to ensure accountability and justification from all department heads on how they spend their budgeted dollars, so the citizens of Union

County can keep more of their own money.

Moreover, I want to bring back the pride the citizens of Union County have in their homes and community and restore the very important public trust in our Union County government.

To this end, I plan to implement an online, publicly accessible portal for all county government financial statements and transactions for taxpayer review, ensuring transparency. In addition, I want to encourage putting to the vote of the people, a multiple commissioner platform giving citizens across Union County their voice and ensuring a system of checks and balances. Contrary to what some believe, a multiple commissioner form of government can be run efficiently and can save the taxpayers' money.

As a County Commissioner, I plan to implement long-term financial planning, for the county to ensure long-term economic stability and the continued delivery of essential services for residents. We need all the great facilities and services of this county to start sustaining themselves instead of being a burden on the taxpayer.

As an active member of the community, and business owner and operator, I know that in today's economy people need family sustaining jobs. I will continue to ensure that new businesses are attracted to our county by working closely with the Economic Development Authority and the Chamber of Commerce. I know that when new businesses settle in our county, they do more than just provide needed jobs; they reduce the tax burden on homeowners and improve our local economy.

To ensure economic prosperity and continued quality of life, I want to support the efforts of the Chamber of

Commerce to promote our area's most appealing features, including strong schools, recreation areas, quality-of-life, gorgeous mountain views with clean air, and friendly people. I also believe that all of us, businesses and community alike, can work together and pitch in to make this the greatest county in the area. I would like to initiate a monthly meeting with all area businesses to make sure we are doing everything we can to help them prosper and stay in business.

I have very deep roots in Union County and have spent many years running around my grandmother's sister's farm in the Choestoe section. My great grandfather, Charlie Rich was the Baptist minister at the Choestoe Baptist Church and many members of my family including my aunt Ann, brother, sisters and cousins live here in Blairsville. My heritage goes back to the Souther's, Dyer's and Collins' lines and I am proud of the contributions they have made to this area over the years.

My wife Erika and I have settled in this county to live for the rest of our lives and I very much want to ensure that Union County continues to be one of the jewels of the North Georgia mountain area.

In closing, I would be honored to serve as your next county commissioner, and I hope I can earn your trust and support over the following months.

I look forward to being able to give back to a community I love and to the people that make it such a great place to live and work. If anyone wants to get in touch just to talk or if there are any questions about my campaign, I can be reached at (706)452-1715. I can be reached by e-mail @ charles@votecharlesrich.com. More details can also be found on my Website votecharlesrich.com.

## Veterans Retraining Assistance Program benefits

The Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) offers 12 months of retraining assistance to Veterans who are: Unemployed; at least 35 but no more than 60 years old; have an other than dishonorable discharge; not eligible for any other VA education benefit program; not in receipt of VA compensation due to Individual Unemployability; not enrolled in a federal or state job training program; enrolled in a VA approved program of education offered by a community college or technical school.

The program is limited as to number of participants. Participants may receive up to 12 months of assistance. The program must train the Veteran for a high demand occupation. Visit [www.gibill.va.gov/VRAP](http://www.gibill.va.gov/VRAP) to learn more.

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## May Commission meeting date change

The May monthly Union County Commission meeting has been rescheduled to Tuesday, May 15 at 6 p.m. The normal monthly meeting is

usually held on Thursdays at the Union County Courthouse.

Tuesday's meeting, which originally was a special called meeting for 5:30 p.m.

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