

## Suches...from Page 1A

60 to the wide open spaces behind Woody Gap School. Lawn chairs and blankets are sprawled out across the landscape as footballs and frisbees begin to take flight.

Others remained in the parking lot taking advantage

of their truck beds while some prepared to view the display from an elevated perch around the Suches Community Center, and as the cool mountain air began to settle in, blankets were put to use for something besides sitting.

As dusk approached and the main event neared, sparklers and glow sticks began to flicker out as everyone looked for the best seat in the house, which was usually beside loved ones, family, and friends.

And when the pyrotechnics began, the clear night sky had the focus of the hundreds gathered throughout the small town. The display lived up to the well-deserved reputation that it has garnered in recent years. And when the fireworks paused for more than a few seconds, the crowd was able to slip in a round of applause before another flash lit up the sky and a vibrating boom that echoed through the hills drowned out the clapping. When it was time for the grand finale, the consensus amongst the crowd was, "how can it

possibly get any better?"

And at the conclusion, the Suches Fire Department had outdone themselves once again. Which is no easy task when you've been dubbed by many as the best fireworks show in the tri-state area.

"Those were the best fireworks that I have ever seen," said Keera Smart, an 11-year old from Hayesville, NC.

"And she's seen Disney World's fireworks," her mom quickly pointed out.

It's hard to believe that this began when a few friends lighting bottle rockets at home decided to meet up at the General Store and set them off together. Eventually they made a trip to Tennessee and picked up around \$200 worth of fireworks. Jim Miner, Peggy Owens and others raided the fire



The celebration began around 6 PM as the crowds began to gather around Woody Gap School. Photo/Todd Forrest

station for hot dogs, hamburgers, colas, and whatever they could find for concessions. And when the food raked in around \$200 to cover the fireworks, a tradition was born.

If you have yet to join Suches for a slice of small

town America topped off with a giant scoop of high powered pyrotechnics, then you are invited to join their 2015 Independence Day party. For those who have already celebrated a July 4th in Suches, then there's no doubt that they'll return.

## Meeks Park...from Page 1A

bridge off of Pinewood Circle. The road will provide parking for Meeks Park along the river, as well as a trail leading into the event field where the Sorghum Festival and other events are held.

"We always knew that the road was there and it could give us access to the backside of the park," Commissioner Paris said. "I negotiated for about two-and-a-half years to buy the property."

In the spring, the county began to clean the property and clear some of the underbrush. The road will be completed this year, with hopes that the mill project will also begin this year.

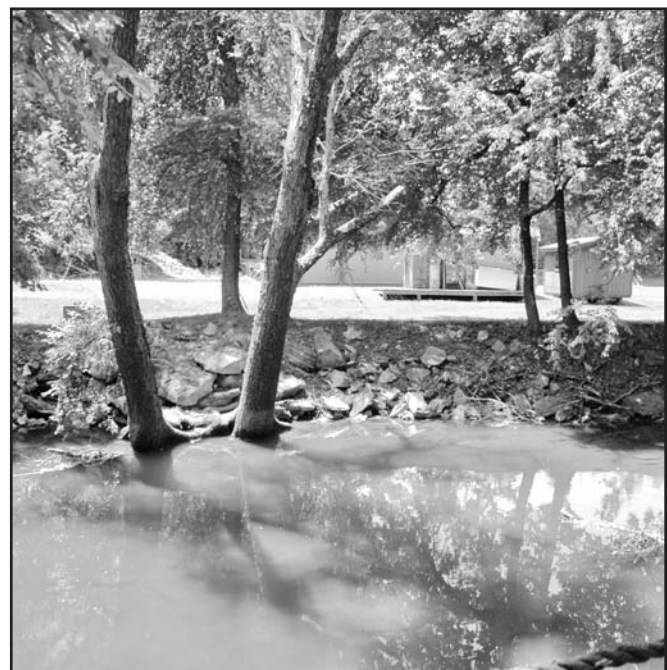
"We are hoping to lay the concrete and get the waterwheel built this year, but more than likely next year," Commissioner Paris said.

Following the completion of the mill, Commission-

er Paris has other plans for the property as well. The county will use the 6-plus acres for additional parking, to expand the park's walking trails, a spot to plant sorghum for use during the festival, and a canoe launch site on the river.

As for the mill itself, upon completion, water will be piped from Butternut Creek to the waterwheel where it will flow back down the side of the hill and create an artificial creek that leads to a waterfall, where the water will re-enter the creek.

"There is a lot of potential with this land," Commissioner Paris said. "Myself, Ricky Davenport, Junior Bridges, Michael Thompson, and Larry Garrett all went out to the park and looked around for a place to put the mill and we collectively agreed on the same spot. It's going to take some work but it'll definitely be worth it."



The view across Butternut Creek from the new site of the old Tate Mill. Photo/Todd Forrest

## Early Voting...from Page 1A

Pruitt, a phlebotomist at Union General Hospital is a lifelong resident of Union County, and a 2003 graduate of Union County High School. During her opening remarks, she made it clear that she had the education of her own two children in mind when she made her decision to seek election.

"I know they are just little kids, but it is for them. They're the whole reason that I'm running," Pruitt said. "I want to better their education. I want to be involved with their education, along with everyone else's kids."

Pruitt promised to perform all aspects of her job and won't be afraid to go against the grain. She also assured everyone that she was willing to go to bat for the teachers and parents.

"I will not be the person who just simply goes with the majority. I feel that it is important to analyze each and every situation as they arise and make the decision that is in our children's best interest.

"I know that it's a very important role that our teachers play in our children's lives, and they do have the hardest jobs and I know they strive to do their very best. I think that by having children in the school system, I feel like I can be a voice for the parents and this community. I do feel that it is important that our children and everyone else's children receive the very best education. I will do my best to listen to everyone of your concerns and needs, and then take them and apply them to our (Board) meetings and will try and do it to the fullest."

In a brief question and answer segment, Pruitt was asked what's wrong with the current system that is the reason for her running.

"I'm running for my children's education," she responded. "I will do my best to help everyone else's children to become what they need to become."

White, the co-owner of Budget Propane is a lifelong Suches resident and a honor graduate from Woody Gap High School. He has a B.S. in Education from North Georgia College and has six years of teaching experience on his resume'.

"I'm a lifelong conservative and I feel as a school board member, not only do you have a responsibility to make sure the kids get the best education, you have a responsibility to the tax payers and the property owners to make sure they are getting the best bang for their buck," White said.

He continued to stress his conservative values by assuring the audience that he was opposed to raising taxes and increasing debts. White, who is a father of two, talked about the importance of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

"If you can't read and don't have reading comprehension, how can you do anything because you're going to forget

a lot" he said. "As a former student and a college graduate, most of the things you study for a test will be forgotten about four days after that. So if you can't read and can't comprehend what you're reading, or if you can't read something and figure out where you're going to go from that, or read a book to repair something, and not be able to comprehend that, you are beat."

White was later asked his stance on teacher tenure and what should be done with subpar teachers.

"I believe that there are provisions that are already

set for a bad teacher, or a bad employee for anybody," he replied. "Georgia is a hire and fire at will state and they (teachers) don't have a union. I agree somewhat with tenure because every year you shouldn't have to go through a reelection to get your job back, but I also believe that if there are bad teachers, there needs to be a way to get those teachers out."

Early voting continues from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday at the Union County Courthouse until July 18th. The Primary Election Runoff will be held on Tuesday, July 22nd.

## Union County Canning Plant open dates

The Union County Canning Plant, 148 Old Smokey Road, Blairsville will be open the following dates in July from 6 a.m. -12 noon: Tuesday, July 8th, Thursday, July 10th, Tuesday, July 15th, Thursday, July 17th, Tuesday, July 22nd, Thursday, July 24th, Tuesday, July 29th, and Thursday, July 31st. Pricing: pints .25 and quarts .35. For more information visit [cannery@uniongov.com](mailto:cannery@uniongov.com) or [ucfarmersmarket.com](http://ucfarmersmarket.com).