

# Street...from Page 1A

the fuss will subside."

The city has plans for a new city parking area behind City Hall. The plans for that lot have been on hold because of a hold up on the cut in to the property from Georgia 515.

Janet Hartman, program director for the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority, says the project is coming in on schedule.

However, the hope was for the project to be ahead of schedule.

"The weather, changes in materials, you name it, it's happened," Hartman said. "In order for us to get the product we want, it's taken us a little bit longer."

"There will be pavers all the way throughout the square, lights will be installed in Downtown," she said. "We're back on track, so that's all in place. The contractor tells

us he'll be done by the first of October.

"The product we had to order will be in next week, so things are going to start moving more quickly and smoother," she said.

Hartman addressed concerns about the landscape beds that seemingly have been making traffic flows in Downtown hazardous.

"Accidents, and we've had one, and making it hard to negotiate the square are the furthest thing from what we wanted to accomplish," Hartman said. "Our goal from the very beginning was to make the square much more pedestrian-friendly. By incorporating some of those landscape beds, it will slow traffic down."

"It will force traffic to flow, which it should anyway, for safety," she said. "Does it mean that it looks a little dif-

ferent? Yes. People pulling up to the square should pay a little more attention."

"Some signage has gone away as we've done construction," she said. "We're getting some of that back up and that reminds people that are on the square as they circle the courthouse, they do have the right of way."

"The folks that are approaching the square from the other streets are to yield," she said. "I personally don't think the landscape beds are the cause of the recent accident at the square."

Hartman said in the coming days, there will be directional signage, striping, and plantings that will bring the project under wraps.

"Once we get finished, people will be able to tell very easily where they should be driving," Hartman said. "Obvi-

ously, the square is still under construction and people should proceed with caution."

"We certainly apologize for all the inconveniences," she said. "It will soon be completed and absolutely beautiful. People are really going to enjoy the Downtown area when this is finished. It's just going to take a little time and patience to see it through."

Mayor Conley said the only thing that would cause the project to go beyond Oct. 1 would be an uncontrollable circumstance.

"The finished product is going to be something that everyone in the community will be proud of, and, it's going to change the look of the Downtown Square," he said.

"The new lighting itself is going to be much improved. "You're going to be amazed at the finished product," he said.

# Quilts...from Page 1A

present, and House District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison was also in attendance, thanking the veterans for everything they had done.

Rep. Allison, who attended military college, pointed out that in just one room, there was roughly 500-700 years of service sitting beside each other.

It was a statement that took everyone aback, as that number was so difficult to fathom.

Joanie McGee, president of the Misty Mountain Quilters' Guild said simply, "We are so proud that we can honor all of you service men wherever you are for all that you do."

"We're glad you're here," she said.

The veterans were proud to be there, too.

Even the toughest of those in attendance still grew misty-eyed, as they were continuously doted on for all that they have done for our country, and continue to do for our community.

The Guild was formed in 2003 by a nurse/midwife whose son was deployed to Iraq.

Ever the success, the guild has awarded 531 quilts in the month of July alone.

Each quilt is registered, tracked, and personalized.

They have been delivered to VA hospitals, nurs-



**One proud vet, Blairsville's Jack McCorkle. Photo/Lowell Nicholson**

ing homes, military service groups, and anywhere else the ladies feel they should go.

For those that were unable to attend the ceremony at the library, volunteers packed a lunch and hand delivered the quilts themselves.

The Community Based Outpatient Clinic, or CBOC, of Blairsville, works with many veterans, therefore figuring out who should be given a quilt.

Once they have ensured it is okay to disclose their names, the quilters are notified. Local VFW's also nominate recipients.

A Lunch and Learn happens every month, and there is always an educational pro-

gram.

Every three months, a quilt ceremony occurs, meaning the volunteer quilters have to work quickly to turn out so many beautiful products.

The group does presentations around the different libraries.

"We're going to Blue Ridge, we're going to Hayesville, NC," Craft added. "The goal is to cover every combat veteran with a quilt."

As organized as the event was, anyone would have assumed the volunteers had been at it for years, but this only marked the beginning of Year Two.

Regardless of the adolescence of the program, Craft

happily mentioned that in just a little over a year, they have reached about 480 veterans through classes and outreach programs.

"It just grows," she said. "It's just one of those things."

Leake presented the event to the national VA headquarters and asked that it be extended beyond just Union County.

The group is currently working on a model to present to other places.

Craft said that they are sending information as to how to collaborate with others, and make the program a national push.

Recipients included: Jimmie Benefield, U.S. Army, Ronald Browning, U.S. Air Force, Richard Campbell, U.S. Army, William Click, U.S. Marines, Mike Desfosses, U.S. Navy, Alejandro Dezayas, U.S. Army, Keith Evans, U.S. Army, Thomas Harvey, U.S. Army, Jim Hoyt, U.S. Air Force, Timothy Jordan, U.S. Army, Russ King, U.S. Air Force, Peter Leaming, Army/Royal New Zealand Air Force, Jack McCorkle, U.S. Marines, Patricia Neigh, U.S. Air Force, Frank Norton, U.S. Army, Roland Oakes, U.S. Air Force, Robert Plush, U.S. Army, Todd Babette, U.S. Air Force, William Reeves, U.S. Army, and Tom Wright, U.S. Army.

# Awake...from Page 1A

Calhoun, Associate Pastor of the Living Word Church in Hayesville, NC led the Prayer of Repentance.

"I believe that we are blessed to be tucked away in a refuge here in the North Georgia Mountains," Calhoun said. "But there is still a lot of stuff going on here in the mountains that we need to pray about."

Then the floor became open for anyone to pray for a number of different categories.

Prayers were sent up for a revival in America, a revival for schools that are back in session, a revival for our churches, a revival for our youth, and a prayer for our men and women in the Armed Forces.

The event closed with

the song Amazing Grace before Long's closing remarks and Benediction.

Long added that there will be an Awake America event held in Blue Ridge next month, the largest of its kind.

There is only a limited number of chairs, so if you plan on attending, bringing a lawn chair is highly recommended.

Sept. 7th will be the date of the Regional Memorial Service at Veterans Memorial Park in Blue Ridge.

All are invited and this event will begin at 11:59 a.m. and is sponsored by the Copper Basin Ministerial Association.

There will be no meeting in Blairsville during Sep-

tember, this event in Blue Ridge will take the place of the monthly event at the Blairsville City Hall.

"That is our biggest event that we have and I want to invite all the churches from all the different communities," Long said.

"I'm sending fliers to Murphy and Ellijay," Long said. "This is a Tri-State thing, and not just for one community. We want to come together as a group of people who love our nation, and love God, and want to uphold righteousness in our community."

"They have a beautiful park over there and we've only got a couple of hundred chairs so you may want to bring a chair," he said.

# Mechanical Fuel Treatment Service

Wildfires always start small with a single spark, one match, or a swift lightning strike, but can turn rapidly into a destructive inferno that destroys anything and everything in its path; plants, animals, trees, vehicles, houses, and even people who become trapped such as the 19 Hotshots in Arizona recently. Wildfires can move very rapidly and destroy in a few minutes what has taken nature many - many years to grow, or houses that has taken us many - many \$\$ to build.

Forest fires are inevitable just like floods, tornados, hurricanes, and droughts and there is nothing that we can do to stop these natural occurring disasters, but we can prepare our forests to minimize the potential damage before one starts. Foresters and forest fire managers for many years have used various methods to remove underbrush from forests that is potential fuel for a destructive wildfire. Prescribed burning is one of the most economical, practical, and desirable fuel reduction methods where the forest floor is burned with a "cool fire" under controlled conditions and causes very little damage to the trees or the surrounding environment.

The prescribed fire removes the potential fuels so there is nothing to accelerate an accidental fire. Prescribed fire leaves a clean forest floor where grasses and plants can grow for wildlife to munch on and also allows rain water to filter into the ground instead of running off.

With our rapidly growing Wildland Urban Interface (people living in the forest) prescribed burning is becoming more and more difficult because people don't want to try to understand the need for reducing the fuel loads in the surrounding forests because they don't want to be unconvinced to smell the smoke even for a few hours. We are a society of "I don't want to be bothered no matter what the reason and I want it fixed or stopped now" and won't listen to reason until the disaster is rushing toward them and then it is too late to fix it.

There are more less intrusive methods to reduce forest fuels although not on as large a scale as prescribe fire. The Georgia Forestry Commission is offering a new service: mechanical fuel treatment. GFC's mechanical fuel treatment offers safe and effective control of understory vegetation that can make wildfire mitigation and control a struggle. These powerful tools, called masticators, churn through places unsuited for traditional methods such as prescribed burning and chemical treatment.

Mechanical fuel treatment is ideal for areas in the wildland-urban interface, land near gas lines, power lines, rights of way and other smoke-sensitive areas. Mechanical fuel treatment machines are specifically equipped to safely and effectively manage the thick understory that grows in Georgia's forests: The machines consist of: 88" wide front mount/



triple rotary deck, rear discharge mechanical underbrush clearing machine that mulches all underbrush and trees up to four inches in diameter efficiently and effectively - much faster than tractor drawn or track machines. It can clear up to two acres per hour and leaves the ground undisturbed and does not produce smoke that people complain so loudly about. The machine is basically a large zero turn mower that will cut and mulch any brush or small trees that it can run over. The mulch is left on the ground to hold in moisture.

To learn more about GFC's masticator mechanical fuel treatment service, contact your local GFC office or call 1-800-GA-TREES or check out the masticator online at: <http://www.gatrees.org/communityforests/wui/MechanicalFuelTreatmentServiceFlyer.pdf>.

Chest/Chatt RC&D promotes any method to reduce the risk for destructive wildfires and for more information on this program or other RC&D programs contact Frank M. Riley, Jr. - Executive Director of the Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council.