

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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## New equipment reaches Union County firefighters

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Union County has gotten that much safer, thanks to the acquisition of 76 new Self-Contained Breathing Apparatuses by the Union County Fire Department.

The Avon Protection Deltair SCBAs boast an improved 45 minutes of air supply while conducting low oxygen search and rescue and fire suppression operations, compared to the older air packs that were in use, which could only hold about 20 minutes worth of air.

Delivered earlier this month, the up-to-date SCBAs are currently on every single fire engine in the county.

"When a house catches on fire, it's got smoke, toxic gases, very heated air, and you just can't go into a building like that under normal conditions, so we put on these SCBAs," said UC Fire Chief David Dyer. "It's a backpack that weighs anywhere from 50 to 60 pounds. It's got a mask



Union County Fire Chief David Dyer shows off the new Self-Contained Breathing Apparatuses the department purchased through a federal grant. The department purchased 76. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

that you put on that hooks to the breathable air.

"This keeps all the toxins and everything else, and enables us to be able to go into the house, to see, to breathe and to be able to function. The ones that we had - if you're in shape and you're doing well and you're not working too hard, you can make one of those older ones

last maybe 15 to 20 minutes. The new ones we have, we can make these last anywhere from 35 to 40 minutes, almost up to 45 minutes."

Many of the older SCBAs were more than 20 years old, dating back to the 1990s, and were heavier with fewer safety features.

One of the features of the new SCBA packs is a bud-

dy breather system, which allows two firemen to hook up to one pack should a fireman run low on air in a burning building.

Another new feature incorporates a speaker system into the breathing mask, enabling firemen to project their voices beyond just shouting

See Equipped, Page 2A

## Walker takes care of business at UCB drive-thru area

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
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Blairsville Police Officer Dustin Walker doesn't profess to be a snake handler or a snake charmer.

Well, you could be fooled the folks in the drive-thru at Union Community Bank's main branch last week.

Walker, a four-year veteran of the Blairsville Police Department and a part-time Union County Sheriff's deputy, came to the rescue following a dispatch call to the UCB drive-thru.

The call came in Tuesday around 2 p.m.

"A call came in that there was a timber rattler at the bank," Officer Walker said. "We get snake calls all the time, everyone thinks they've seen a copperhead or a rattlesnake, but, it's usually just a black snake."

"Well, this time, it was a rattlesnake," he said. "It surprised me that it was a rattlesnake right here in the middle of town."

When Officer Walker arrived, the snake had made its



This 3 and a half-foot long timber rattler surprised patrons at Union Community Bank on Tuesday.

way into the drainpipe in the drive-thru.

"I looked in the drain and it was in there and it was rattling," Officer Walker said. "I didn't have anything to get it out of there."

UCB's William Stone advised Officer Walker that someone came driving through the drive-thru and ran over the

See Rattler, Page 3A

## Charity Disc Golf Tourney at Meeks Park Aug. 23



By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Allegheny Lodge No. 114 is hosting its first ever Charity Disc Golf Tournament at Meeks Park on Sunday, Aug. 23, and everyone who registers for the event will get a free disc.

There are several divisions within the tournament, including advanced, intermediate, novice, men and women, as well as an under 16 youth division.

Adult registration is \$33, and children under 16 can compete for just \$28. On-

site registration begins at 8:30 a.m., with a tee off time of 10 a.m. Sunday.

"The money is for a charity account that will go to the Masonic Home," said Lodge Senior Warden Ronny Benfield, who organized the event. "We give out food baskets in December. We gave out this year \$4,000 in scholarships, and our charity account covers the scholarships, and there are many other charitable Masonic things that we give to."

Benfield has been playing disc golf for over a year, and he got the idea for the

fundraiser after participating in the annual Meeks Madness disc golf tournament earlier this year.

"You play it just like regular golf, but instead of using a golf ball and a club, you use a special kind of Frisbee," said Benfield. "You've got putters, midranges, fairways and drivers on the discs, and each disc does a certain thing. Some go straight and some curve at the end. You basically just tee off, you throw the disc, and wherever it lands, you throw it again until you make it into the basket."

A member of Allegheny

Lodge No. 114 since 1994, Benfield now holds the second highest post in the lodge - a charitable aims of the lodge.

There will be a drawing for door prizes, including disc golf bags, T-shirts, mini discs and other discs provided by tournament sponsor Discraft, a leading disc golf supplier out of Wisconsin.

The event is not sanctioned by the Professional Disc Golf Association, as the proceeds will all go to the

See Tourney, Page 2A

## Alone series finale Thursday, 10 p.m.

By Charles Duncan  
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Blairsville's Alan Kay is one step away from \$500,000.

Kay, 40, a corrections officer at Colwell Probation Detention Center in Blairsville, is one of two final survivors on the History Channel series *Alone*.

The final episode airs Thursday at 10 p.m. on the History Channel.

Labeled as the country's boldest and longest survival experiment ever captured for television, *Alone* has aired ever Thursday, at 10 p.m. since June 18.

Sam Larson, a 22-year-old customer relations representative from Lincoln, Neb. is the other lone survivor.

The 10-episode series put 10 hardcore survivalists alone in the Vancouver Island wilderness - no camera crew, no teams, and no producers - on a single mission to stay alive.

At stake - \$500,000 awarded to the person who can last the longest.

Carrying only what they can fit in a backpack, the survivalists are completely



Alan Kay

separated from one another in harsh, unforgiving terrain to hunt, build shelters and fend off predators. They have faced extreme isolation and psychological distress as they plunged into the unknown, self-documenting their experience.

The series, which has reached more than 96 million homes, is labeled as the ultimate test of man's will to survive.

"*Alone* is a one-of-a-kind survival series, that pits people against the unknown in complete isolation," said Russ McCarroll, vice president of Development and Programming for the History Channel.

See Alone, Page 3A

## Blairsville couple charged with fraudulently obtaining drugs

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
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A Blairsville couple has been arrested and charged with almost a dozen counts each of fraudulently obtaining controlled substances.

Lois Taylor, 50, and Gilbert Taylor, 56 were arrested last week following an extended investigation by the Union County Narcotics Squad, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

"Both been charged with 10 counts of fraudulently obtaining controlled substance," Sheriff Mason said. "The controlled substances obtained were oxycodone and hydrocodone. Both Gilbert and Lois were employees at the Vantage Oncology office located here in Union County."

"The investigation showed that both Gilbert and Lois Taylor were picking up forged prescriptions," Sheriff Mason said. "This investigation has uncovered numerous other counts of fraudulently obtaining controlled substances made by both Gilbert and Lois Taylor which will be presented to the upcoming



Gilbert Taylor



Lois Taylor

Union County Grand Jury.

"Both are no longer employees with Vantage Oncology and have been released from the Union County Jail with bond conditions," Sheriff Mason said.

See Bust, Page 3A

## Union County jams and jellies are the best

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Union County Farmers Market celebrated Jam and Jelly Day on Saturday, Aug. 15, where patrons were able to buy biscuits for a dollar and sample several of the market vendors' sweet spreads.

"It's just like homemade, it's better than what you can buy in the store," said Market Manager Mickey Cummings. "We're just trying to get people to try those."

"We have two or three people who sell them, and you can't hardly beat homemade peach jam or homemade blackberry jam on a good, hot Millie's biscuit."

"We're just trying to let people try those and encourage them to use products that are made and grown here in Blairsville or the surrounding area."



Dot Patterson sells jams and jellies on Saturday at the Union County Farmers Market. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Millie Arrowood, known locally for starting successful restaurants that she then sold - Riverside, Cook's, The Cookie Jar, The Sawmill Place, among others - has been running the food cart at the Farmers Market for a few weeks now, and she's excited about the opportunity.

Cummings added that Arrowood's biscuits are the best he's ever had - better than his grandmother's, and he loved those.

"They're just homemade," said Arrowood on the secret to her biscuits. "They're not out of a bag or anything, we just do them in a bowl"

old-timey way. There's an ingredient - if you don't have the love that you put in them, they're no good."

Arrowood and Cummings have yet to come up with a name for the Farmers Market restaurant, but

See Market, Page 2A

Vol. 106 No. 34 Inside

2 Sections, 24 Pages

Arrests 8A

Weather Church 9A

Thurs: Rain Hi 77 Lo 64

Fri: Clouds Hi 82 Lo 63

Sat: Clouds Hi 85 Lo 64

Opinion 2B

Classifieds 4A

Legals 4B

Obits 11A

Sports 14A

See page 8A

UGH Auxiliary hosts Jewelry Sale

See page 8A

A Salute to Farmers 2015 Tractor Show & Parade

See page 6A

Big Country Breakfast Boy Scout Fundraiser

See page 10A

SPORTS

SOFTBALL

Thurs. Aug. 20 @ Rabun 5 PM

Sat. Aug 22 @ YHC vs. Apalachee 10PM and vs. Gilmer NOON