

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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## Culpepper Years an important time in UCHS history

By Charles Duncan  
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The name Larry Culpepper rings loud and clear in the annals of Union County Marching Band lore.

Don't confuse him with the Dr. Pepper legend, Larry Culpepper, you know, the guy who invented the College Football Playoff System on a napkin.

No, this Larry Culpepper will always be remembered for taking the Union County band program to the next level. Given, it didn't have to be a high level - he started with 15 band members and no youth band program.

However, from 1971 to 1979, Larry Culpepper, with the help of his energetic wife Marcie Culpepper, grew the Union County band program from 15 members to 144 strong when they left after



Larry and Marcie Culpepper pose inside their old marching grounds, Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

the 1979 school year. Actually, the program was stronger than that - there were 85 band members in the elementary and middle school programs when the Culpeppers left Union County.

On Sept. 12, from 2 to 5 p.m., at the First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, in

Blairsville, Larry and Marcie Culpepper will see faces that they haven't seen since they left the Union County band program in 1979.

It's a reunion of the Culpepper Years, a time when the Union County Band Program became significant in the lives of this mountain community.

"In the 70s, times were a little slower pace in the mountains. We were very fortunate that the Union County School System saw the importance of a strong band program in Union County - a lot of schools were not able to offer a band program," said Culpepper disciple Dwain Brackett. "Thankfully they were able to convince Larry Culpepper to leave Villa Rica and come back to the mountains of North Georgia. What they probably didn't know - they were getting a two-for-one deal because they also got Marcie Culpepper."

Here's how the Union County School System persuaded Larry and Marcie Culpepper to make the jaunt to this rural mountain community from Villa Rica.

As the result, Larry Culpepper's brother-in-

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## EMC Board of Directors give resigned GM six-month severance package

By Charles Duncan  
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In a response to a motion to dismiss a lawsuit filed in Towns County Superior Court by Blue Ridge Mountain EMC members Krista L. Gooch, Larry Williams, Andrew E. Stephens and Barbara Moss, it has been revealed that resigned General Manager Matthew Akins has been given a six-month severance package by the BRMEMC Board of Directors.

The severance package, according to court documents indicate that Akins will receive the salary he received as general manager of the cooperative, in-

cluding insurance benefits.

The severance package was approved at a called meeting of the Board of Directors on Sept. 1, the *North Georgia News* and *Towns County Herald* have learned.

The vote on the severance package was not unanimous, the newspapers have learned.

The newspapers reported that Akins came before the BRMEMC Board of Directors on Aug. 18 and offered his resignation if he could be demoted to the position of engineer. The newspapers reported that the board told him that decision had to be made by

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## Four qualify for Blairsville City Council

By Charles Duncan  
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Four people, including three incumbents have qualified to run for Blairsville City Council.

Qualifying ended last week for three seats on the Blairsville City Council with incumbents Betty Easter, Martha Cone and Rhonda Mahan signing up to seek reelection.

Frank Pack qualified to seek a council seat.

The election is non-partisan. With that in mind, the top three vote getters will earn a seat on the Blairsville City Council.



Betty Easter

The last day to register and be eligible to vote in the Nov. 3 election will be Oct. 5. Early voting will begin on Oct. 13, and end on Oct. 30. Absentee ballots and advance ballots will be available at 62 Blue



Martha Cone

Ridge Street in Blairsville. The polls will be open on Election Day from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. If there is a need for a runoff election, the date of that election will be Dec. 1.

Blairsville Mayor Jim



Rhonda Mahan

Conley, Mayor Pro-Tem Buddy Moore and Councilman Tony Dyer were not up for reelection during this election cycle, all three returned to Council following the 2013 elections.

## Three enter Agriculture Hall of Fame

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Zed William Seabolt, Francis Eugene Dyer and William Clyde Collins Sr. share a singular distinction - all three were inducted into the Union County Historical Society Agriculture Hall of Fame on Saturday, Sept. 5.

"The importance is the heritage of Union County and all of the people that had farmed and produced for other people to use and buy," said Historical Society President Bud Akins. "It's a big deal in Union County for agriculturists."

The induction took place just prior to the 2015 Tractor Show and Parade at the Union County Farmers Market, and opening the ceremony was 17-year-old



Clyde Collins, center, and family, the F.E. Dyer family, and others celebrate the induction of Zed Seabolt, F.E. Dyer, and Clyde Collins into the Union County Agriculture Hall of Fame. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

men to be friends, and each shared personal stories. Being inducted into the Union County Agriculture Hall of Fame highlights the hard work and dedication of its inductees, all of whom have indelibly influenced the

agricultural heritage of the county with their contributions. Collins, who will be 94 years old this year, is the only surviving member

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## Tractor Parade gets better every year

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The Sixth Annual Union County Farmers Market Tractor Show and Parade went off without a hitch on Saturday, Sept. 5, as more than 30 tractors competed for ribbons and paraded for market patrons.

Billed as a "Salute to Our Farmers," judges with firsthand tractor knowledge doled out Blue Ribbons for 10 categories, and several partic-



ipants participated with prize money.

Best in Show went to Bill England of Brasstown, NC, who entered his mint condition orange 1946 Case tractor.

"We just do this for fun - we enjoy it," said England, who was pleasantly surprised to win the highest accolade for the day. "I've probably got about 20 different tractors, but a lot of them are in a mess."

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## 2015 Property Tax Bills are on the way

By Charles Duncan  
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Union County Tax Commissioner Lee Knight informs taxpayers that their 2015 property tax bills are almost in their hands.

"Union County taxpayers should start receiving their tax bills the week of Sept. 14th," Commissioner Knight said. "This year there are 24,569 real and personal prop-



Lee Knight

erty tax bills being mailed to generate a total of \$20,423,117 in tax revenue for the Board of Education, county government, and the state.

"This is the last year that there will be any money collected on our property tax bills for the state, as the state portion on your property tax bill will be eliminated after this year," Commissioner Knight said. "Tax bills are still going to have a due date of Dec.

20th. The Union County Tax Commissioner's Office will accept a partial payment prior to the due date and this will also give our taxpayers almost 100 days notice before the Dec. 20th due date.

"Taxpayer's can also go online to our website www.uniongatax.com to search, view and pay their property taxes, make partial pay-

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## Convicted felon confesses to murdering 55-year-old Union man

By Charles Duncan  
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A 44-year-old career criminal has confessed to the murder of 55-year-old Randy Ray Siggers.

Siggers, who lived at 2521 Highway 325, was found dead Wednesday, Sept. 2 by Union County Sheriff's Deputy Jennifer Carnes, who was conducting a welfare check at his residence.

Eric Bruce Dohnert, 44, who was basically taken in by Siggers and given a place to live, has been charged with his murder. He confessed to Siggers' murder while being interrogated by Union County Sheriff's Detective Sgt. Andrew Hammond and GBI Special Agent Ben Couch in Colquitt County, Union County Sheriff's Detective Lt. Daren Osborn said.

Siggers died of blunt force trauma to the head, Lt. Osborn said.

"It's believed he was killed Aug. 27, or Aug. 28," Lt. Osborn said.



Eric Bruce Dohnert

Sheriff's deputies were alerted to the crime scene on Highway 325 in Union County after a resident in the neighborhood hadn't seen or heard from Siggers in several days and went by to check on him. The neighbor noticed a strange, foul odor near the residence.

The neighbor called 911 and deputies soon arrived on the scene.

"Deputy Jennifer Carnes first noticed a cracked

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## More commerce headed Downtown

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The Wine Shoppe, formerly of Bracketts, is coming to the Downtown Blairsville Square, and a new wood fire grill restaurant will be opening in the near future across from Blairsville City Hall, where construction has begun.

These were just two topics covered in the September meeting of Mayor Jim Conley and the Blairsville City Council that highlighted the strong economic engine underpinning development within city limits of late.

"All of our retail businesses are doing really well right now, even our service industry businesses are doing really well," said Mayor Conley following the meeting. "We just couldn't be hap-



Buddy Moore

pier with traffic downtown. We've got more walking traffic downtown than we've ever had before."

Not an agenda item but also discussed was the newly opened Chick-fil-A restaurant in Blairsville, and Mayor Conley spoke on conversations he

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## Ride to Remember never forgets

By Shawn Jarrard  
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The unprovoked terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, perpetrated on American soil resulting in the deaths of thousands of Americans and launching the longest war in U.S. history must never be forgotten.

Which is why greater than 800 motorcyclists demonstrated their patriotism during the annual 9/11 Ride to Remember over the Labor Day Weekend, on Sunday, Sept. 6.

Starting from the ride's parent sponsor Cycle World of Athens, hundreds of bikers with big hearts traveled roughly 100 miles through seven North Georgia counties



on a journey of remembrance that ended up at the Copperhead Lodge in Union County.

The honorary Grand Marshal for the 2015 ride was Cathy Wells, mother of USMC Lance Cpl. Skip Wells. Her son was one of four Marines gunned down in an apparent

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Young Cane Lodge

Bar-B-Que

Fri. Sept 11th

on the Square

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Union County

Fine Arts Center

Grand Opening

and Ribbon Cutting

Sept. 10th

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Blairsville

Sorghum

Festival

2nd and 3rd Weekends

in October at

Meeks Park

SPORTS

FOOTBALL

Fri. Sept 11 @ Andrews 7:30 PM

SOFTBALL

Tues Sept 8 @ Social Circle DH 4 & 6 PM

Fri & Sat @ Cherokee Invitational

CROSS COUNTRY

Tues Sept.8 @ Banks Co 4:30 PM