

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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September 10, 2014

Wednesday at 4 p.m. deadline to vote online for EMC board of directors

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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The online election of three board of directors to Blue Ridge Mountain EMC concludes Wednesday at 4 p.m.

In a note from General Manager Matthew Akins in the August electric bills, he tells members that one of the most important parts in the operation of the Cooperative is their participation in the election of Board members.

"In the past, you have had to attend the Annual Meeting to vote in person. To provide more member participation in the process of Director Elections you will now be allowed to vote online," Akins writes.

Online voting is avail-



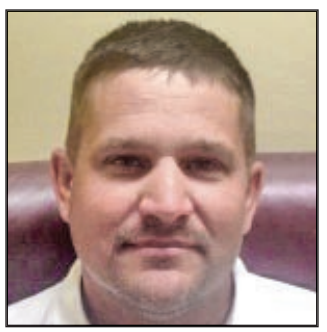
Julie Payne (I)



Brian Trout (I)



Lenny Parks (I)



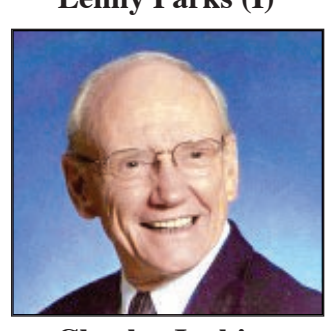
Mike Patton



Steven Phillips



Chris Logan



Charles Jenkins

able at www.brmemc.com until Sept. 10th at 4 p.m. Login information (identification number and verification code) is provided on the front side of each member's bill. The annual meeting is on Saturday, Sept. 13 at Anderson Music Hall in Hiawassee. Registration begins at 8 a.m. "Login information will

appear only on the bill tied to your membership number," Akins writes. "If you have any questions, please call our office at (706) 379-3121."

Each member who is not in a status of suspension, as provided in Section 2.01, of the EMC bylaws, shall be entitled to one vote and no more upon each matter submitted to a vote at any meeting of the members, including votes cast by mail ballots and electronic transmission.

All ballots cast other than those cast in person at the meeting shall be in the office of the EMC on or before the close of business the day before the member meeting.

There are three members nominated by the Cooperative's Board of Directors: Brian Trout of Clay County, See EMC, 3A

Chick-fil-A is in the cards for Blairsville

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

As the news of Chick-fil-A founder Truett Cathy's death spreads, news of Blairsville's first Chick-fil-A has surfaced.

The iconic restaurant founder of the No. 1 chicken chain in America died early Monday at the age of 93.

Meanwhile, the newest restaurant in town is set to go in adjacent to FATZ on Georgia 515.

Representatives of a Chick-fil-A franchise submitted a sign permit application that was approved at the regular meeting of Mayor and City Council of Blairsville on Tuesday, Sept. 2.

Chick-fil-A is coming



Mayor Jim Conley

to Blairsville; it's just a matter of when.

"We don't know anything other than we approved

their signage, because that was a definite," said Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley.

According to the Union County Building and Development Department, Chick-fil-A has submitted three site plans so far. The most recent submission dates to July 22.

The county building department currently awaits the restaurant's Erosion and Sediment Plans before it can approve the latest version of the site plan.

The July 2014 plan illustrates a 4,528-square-foot building, with seating for 96 patrons within the restaurant, and outdoor seating to accommodate 15. Parking will surely not be an issue, with a proposed 49 regular spaces and three handicap spaces, totaling

52 parking spots.

Chick-fil-A bought the 1.02-acre lot from W. C. Nelson, who also owns the piece of land between the proposed site of Chick-fil-A and Plott Street.

On the site plan, the lot is currently divided into two kinds of area: impervious and pervious. Impervious means the ground is covered in pavement, concrete or some other artificial material that goes into making building pads and parking lots, meaning that area would be impenetrable by water.

Existing acreage of impervious area sits right around .29 acres. Once the restaurant is built, the site plan proposes

See Chick-fil-A, 2A

Parks pleads guilty, gets 90 days in county jail; 5 years probation

By Charles Duncan
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A former Union County Sheriff's deputy, who once served on the Appalachian Drug Task Force, has pleaded guilty to theft by conversion before Union County Superior Court Judge Raymond George.

Garrick Parks, who served under former Union County Sheriff Scott Stephens, was originally indicted on two charges of theft by taking and two charges of theft by conversion, Union County Superior Court records show.

Two additional charges were added during Parks' re-indictment in July 2012: two counts violation of oath of office by a law enforcement officer, Union County Superior Court records show.

Parks pleaded guilty to



Garrick Parks

two counts of theft by conversion, with the second count being concurrent to the first count of theft by conversion.

Parks was sentenced under the First Offender Act to 90 days in the Union County Detention Center, repayment of \$4,691 taken from civil forfeiture actions, a \$2,000 fine and five years probation.

See Parks, 2A

Family a huge part of Dr. Nuelle's makeup

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Meet Dylan Nuelle.

Dylan is the son of banjo player Doug and wife Tonya Nuelle, both of whom practice medicine out of Union General Hospital. And Dylan is a regular chip off the old block.

"He's 12-years-old, and he's the musician. He plays drums, bass, and trumpet," said orthopedic surgeon Dr. Doug Nuelle, who also has a daughter, Rebecca, and granddaughter, Caroline, living in Florida.

And when the Nuelles aren't jamming out in a band or hanging with kin, the husband and wife duo keep busy standing on the cutting edge of medicine.

Dr. Nuelle recently lectured at the Pan Pacific Orthopaedic Congress in Hawaii, which represented specialists from four continents. He will give the same lecture on his work with soft tissue balancing in total knee replacements this month at the Georgia Orthopaedic Society's annual meeting.



Dr. Doug Nuelle, of Union General Hospital, and the Whistle Stop Bluegrass Band.

"One of the problems that has come along with trying to do soft tissue balancing is that it's still kind of guesswork," said Dr. Nuelle.

And that guesswork is completely subjective, with doctors using personal judgment to tell if a knee replacement is too loose or too tight,

which cannot truly be measured until the patient walks with the knee.

Twenty years ago, Dr. Nuelle designed an instrument for evaluating the balance of a knee joint to take the guesswork out of including skin, muscles, ligaments and the

capsule that wraps around the joint itself.

"I have done near 4,000 joint replacements using the balance that I designed and patented. And I've only had two people that I've had to manipulate out of 4,000, and there were reasons why they had to have it manipulated," said Dr. Nuelle. Knee manipulation stretches out soft tissue in knee replacements that are too tight.

The device looks somewhat like a vice clamp, though it works in the opposite capacity. To simplify its function, the instrument fits between the leg bones where the knee is to sit and expands to test elasticity of the soft tissue in the area.

Dr. Nuelle studied this application of force in patients while performing routine knee replacements and made a remarkable discovery - the dynamical sweet spot for people of all sizes and sexes is about 60 pounds of force to keep the knee acting as it should. And if the patient

See Nuelle, 3A

Commissioner Paris sets 2015 Millage Rate

By Charles Duncan
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Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris hates rising taxes as much as anyone.

And the county's millage rate is on the rise from 5.408 to 5.890 mills.

"Property taxes are basically paid in arrears," said Commissioner Paris. "The tax bill you'll hopefully be getting soon will be for the 2014 year taxes, but they fund the 2015 year budget."

Paris created packets complete with colored charts for citizens to review, favorably comparing Union County to similarly sized counties in the area.

Various types of charts, including bar graphs and pie charts, helped to bridge the gap between ease of understanding and the bureaucracy



Lamar Paris

of the numbers.

"Everything is done in the form of millage rates, so that's how we determine property tax," said Commissioner Paris. "If your taxes are 5 mills, you're going to multiply that times 0.005 times the value of your property to actu-

See County Millage, 2A

Sheriff fires jailer amid sexual assault charges

By Charles Duncan
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Union County Sheriff Mack Mason has terminated a jailer following an investigation by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation into allegations of sexual assault on an inmate, Sheriff Mason said.

Andrew Martin, 36, is free on bail following his Aug. 27 arrest by GBI special agents, Sheriff Mason said.

Martin is accused of sexual assault on a Union County inmate, Union County Jail records show.

"I will carry out the duties of my office and hold the people that work in the Sheriff's Office accountable," Sheriff Mason said.



Andrew Martin

GBI Special Agent in Charge Kim Williams from Region 8 in Cleveland, said her agency was asked to provide assistance by Sheriff Ma-

son on Aug. 26.

"The Union County Sheriff's Office received information that a Union County jailer was involved in inappropriate contact with an inmate on Aug. 19," Agent Williams said.

When information came forward of alleged misconduct by Martin, an internal investigation was immediately launched, Sheriff Mason said.

"Administrative charges were placed and he was terminated from service without delay," the sheriff said. "As the internal findings were establishing a basis for administrative action, GBI was contacted and requested to conduct a criminal investigation into the allegations to determine if any

See Jailer, 2A

City approves 2015 budget, millage

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Mayor Jim Conley and the Blairsville City Council met for their regular meeting Tuesday, Sept. 2, and passed the new Fiscal 2015 budget as well as the city's millage rate.

The 2014 budget was \$3,746,010, and the new operating budget for Fiscal 2015 is \$3,826,585, an increase of \$80,575.

Specifically, the General Fund, which is responsible for services like police, the mayor and city council's salaries, etc., increased by \$23,260. The water and sewer fund went up \$71,415, while

the airport fund decreased \$14,100 for Fiscal 2015.

And for many years now, the city's millage rate has remained steady at 2.00 mills, and 2014 will be no different.

Keeping the millage rate the same translates into lower property taxes for Blairsville residents, as the current 2014 tax digest shows lower overall property values within the city when compared to last year's assessment. City taxes levied this year will be \$123,475, or \$2,805 less than total property taxes collected in 2013.

In other business, Blairsville attorney Cary Cox spoke, representing client Avi Harpaz, who is the authorized

representative for the recently acquired Mountain View RV Resort near the airport on the Blue Ridge Highway.

As it stands, the RV park is in the Coosa Water Authority's district, but Coosa Water does not have the capacity or pressure to deliver the kind of water the park is going to need, which is about 95,000 gallons per day.

Cox sought a commitment from the city of Blairsville that it would service water and sewer if the lines were built, at which point his client could start designing the lines based on that commitment.

The lines are set to be-

See City Business, 2A

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