

## Allison...from Page 1A

will also serve on the House Appropriations, Judiciary, Energy and Telecommunications, and Juvenile Justice Committees.

While serving in the House, Rep. Allison has sponsored a variety of different legislation pieces including, the Physicians for Rural Areas

Assistance Act, which authorizes the State Medical Education Board to offer grants to enhance recruitment efforts to bring physicians to underserved rural areas of Georgia and was the House sponsor of SB 33, the Zero Based Budgeting Act of 2012, which was signed by Gov. Nathan

Deal and will bring greater transparency and accountability into the state's budget process.

He has been a recipient of the "Defender of Liberty Award" and the Environmental Leadership Award from the Georgia Conservation of Voters, as well as "Legislator

of the Year" by the Georgia Firefighters Association.

When he is not serving under the Gold Dome, Stephen practices law in Union County where he has called home for over 17 years. He lives in Blairsville with his wife, Regina, and their two sons, Thomas and Nathanael.

## Gowder...from Page 1A

guidance specifically for these decision-makers. Each of the 12 annual issues of Becker's Hospital Review reaches a qualified audience of approximately 18,500 healthcare leaders."

But to Dr. Gowder, being named to the Becker's list is more a reflection on the hospital than anything else.

"If it weren't for the hospital, I wouldn't be getting this award," said Dr. Gowder, who spoke on the good reputation of UGH. "I think it's more a recognition for the hospital than it is me."

During his 14-year tenure as COO, the hospital experienced a period of ambitious growth, which included a \$34 million expansion project that added more than 80,000 square feet to hospital grounds.



Furthermore, dramatic improvements were made to the services available within the hospital, such as a state-of-the-art ICU, operating suite, and a host of upgrades and additions to the labor and delivery facilities within the hospital.

And since becoming CEO in January of 2013, Dr. Gowder has maintained the hospital's progressive reputation.

"Under his guidance, the hospital has been able to recruit specialty physicians and surgeons to the rural area," according to Becker's, which continues that in 2013, "the hospital received the Georgia Hospital Association's Patient Safety Leaders Circle award, and The Women's Choice Award with distinction as one of America's Best 100 Hospitals for Patient Experience from WomenCertified."

One such specialty

physician, Dr. Doug Nuelle, began practicing medicine out of UGH in July of 2013, and moved his offices to the hospital in March of 2014. Dr. Nuelle is a world-renowned board certified orthopedic surgeon, and a welcome addition to Union County's medical community.

Bringing in modern, cutting edge technology has been a priority of Dr. Gowder's from day one, and as CEO, he has continued that best practice.

Up-to-date CT units, a 3-D mammogram and brand new facilities, such as the Cardio-Pulmonary Rehabilitation Unit that opened in December of 2014 and the upcoming completion of an 8,000-square-foot Outpatient Rehabilitation Center and new Wound Care Clinic featuring two hyperbaric chambers, are all a part of Dr. Gowder's vision as CEO of UGH.

Plans are in the works to open a new clinic in Hayesville, NC, and Chatuge Regional Hospital of Hiwassee has acquired new medical equipment, is receiving a modern aesthetic upgrade to the building and will be opening a geriatric psychiatric unit in May of this year.

Union General Hospital Inc. is responsible for the operation of many facilities in the surrounding area, including Union General Hospital, Chatuge Regional Hospital and Nursing Home, Union County Nursing Home, Union County Dialysis, the Clinic at Walmart, Union General Wellness Center and the Glenda Gooch House.

Dr. Gowder is unsure how his name came under the Becker's radar to begin with, but since being named to the list, some of Dr. Gowder's staff at the hospital have nominated him for Becker's Rural Health CEOs to Know, which will be determined at a later date.

This accomplishment is, to Dr. Gowder, the outcome of the hard work of not just himself, but many, including former CEO of UGH Rebecca Dyer.

"The reason this hospital is successful and continues to be debt-free and make money, which is unusual in today's world, is because she left it in such good shape," said Dr. Gowder. "And it's not just her, but it's our medical staff, along with her and our employees. To me, there are three components of why this hospital does well: administration, medical staff and employees."

## City Council takes care of business

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The Blairsville City Council has completed its organizational appointments for 2015.

Council Member Rhonda Mahan will serve as the Council's liaison to Blairsville Police Department; Council Member Betty Easter will serve as the Council's liaison to the Blairsville Municipal Airport; Council Member Tony Dyer will serve as the Council's liaison to the City's Streets and Sidewalks department; Council Member Martha Cone will serve as the Council's liaison to the Union County Historical Society, and Mayor Pro Tem Buddy Moore will serve as the Council's liaison to the City's Water and Sewer department.

City Attorney Janna Akins was reappointed to that position for 2015.

City Clerk Janice Gratton was reappointed as City Clerk and Superintendent of Elections for 2015.

Mahan was appointed to serve as the Council's representation on the Downtown Development Authority.

In other business, the Council set the qualifying fees for the 2015 City Council Election at \$108. Council members Mahan, Easter and Cone are up for reelection this year.

The Council also accepted intergovernmental agreements from the Downtown Development Authority, Union County Historical Society and the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce regarding the division of Hotel/Motel tax dollars. The Chamber will receive 40 percent of those dollars, DDA will receive 25 percent, as will the Union County Historical Society, and 10 percent will be used for administrative costs.

Union County Sheriff Mack Mason attended the meeting and thanked the Council for the City's remarkable cooperation between City Employees and the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Mason told the Council that the working relationship between the Sheriff's Office and Blairsville Police Department was remarkable.

The Council appointed Randy Day as the city's Soil and Erosion Officer for 2015. He will be paid \$5,000 for the year.

In other business, the Council approved the Occupational Tax Certificate and Sign Permit for Life Wellness Center & Bookstore.

The Council also approved a sign permit for

Crawdaddy's Crossfit.

The Council also authorized a payment of \$597.50 to pay for the City's advertisement in the Community Guide.

The Council approved a sign permit for Jones Petro.

The Council approved an Occupational Tax Certificate and sign permit for Jennifer Wimpey Fletes.

The Council approved an Occupational Tax Certificate and sign permit for Los Tres Reyes Tienda Mexicana. The sign permit is contingent

upon an approved application.

The Council approved an Occupational Tax Certificate to Tri-State Aquariums.

The Council approved an Occupational Tax Certificate and sign permit to Sun-Sations Tanning Salon.

The Council approved a contract with Monumental Equipment for annual maintenance on 12 pumps for the Wastewater Treatment Facility. The cost of the service is \$6,715.