

North Georgia News

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Rain can't stop 45th Sorghum Fest

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer



Sorghum Parade Grand Marshal Leon Davenport. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Those who attended the 45th Annual Sorghum Festival were dodging raindrops on Saturday morning as the Sorghum Festival Parade rolled through Downtown Blairsville to kickoff the opening day of the traditional event.

The parade, featuring Grand Marshal U.S. Army Major (retired) Leon Davenport, began under a light mist at 11 a.m. and as soon as everyone finished his or her lap through town, the mist turned into a steady rain, as if Mother Nature was awaiting the parade's conclusion.

Meanwhile, at Meeks Park the festival was getting underway, and just like the parade, the precipitation didn't deter the crowds that were anxious to take part in

the North Georgia March with more than 100 vendors setting up at this year's event, the most ever, there was plenty to do.

And that's not including

the entertainment and contests that the festival is famous for.

At 9 a.m. Saturday, the mill began crushing and cooking sorghum, while vendors began opening their booth and

demonstrations began.

In the early afternoon the Biskit Eatin' contest took place followed by the Pole Climbin', the Log Sawin', the Rock Throw, and Baccur Spittin' contests.

There were plenty of musical acts performing during the first and second weekend, including everything from Gospel, Country, and Bluegrass music to suit just about everyone's musical preferences.

Following Grand Marshal Davenport, the most decorated soldier in Union County history, was the Union County High School Pride of the Mountains Marching Band and a John Deere tractor pulling a trailer full of cane, and youngsters representing the Young Cane Lodge 597.

See Sorghum, 6A

No tax dollars obligated for Tan Yard Apartments

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer



Tony Dyer

Mayor Jim Conley and the Blairsville City Council held their regular meeting at city hall on Tuesday, Oct. 7, at 6 p.m.

Representing the Housing Authority of Cordele, attorney Blake Sharpton held a public hearing in regards to a bond issuance extension to remodel the Tan Yard Branch Apartments, which is owned by the Cordele Housing Authority.

The Cordele Housing Authority owns other properties around the state, and was actually issued the bonds in question last year.

"They just didn't get this

project done in the time limit that they issued the bonds for, so they had to come back and update their bond time limit to get the project done," said

See Council, 2A

Awake America continues at City Hall

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer



Locals pray for America at Blairsville City Hall on Oct. 7. Awake America is at City Hall the first Thursday of each month. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

The "Awake America" monthly community prayer meeting took place on the first Thursday in October in the meeting room of Blairsville City Hall.

"I'm glad to see each and every one of you here this morning," said Mayor Jim Conley, who opened the meeting with an invocation.

"We're still few in numbers, but we're here for the right reasons - we'll have to make our prayers loud, for those who are not here, and maybe they'll hear us, too."

This local movement for prayer began when Lydia Long, who is the intercessory prayer leader at World Harvest Church North out of Blairsville, felt prompted by the Lord to Google "Awake America" back in 2009.

"It said that people were meeting around the

United States at noon on 9/11 in honor of remembering the fallen, and to pray for America on courthouse steps around the United States," said Long.

"So, we started our own

Awake America movement that month."

Not long after, the Copper Basin Ministerial Association approached Long about holding the meeting monthly

instead of yearly, and she sought guidance from her pastor at WHC North, Asa Dockery, and his wife, Debbie.

"They said yes, I think this is a move of God," said Long. "So, we started then, and for six years, we've been meeting in Downtown Blue Ridge at the gazebo in the city park, monthly, praying, with all different denominations coming together. Every month, whether it's cold or hot, it doesn't matter, we're still there."

Long brought the Awake America meetings to Blairsville in June of 2013, when "the Lord laid it upon my heart."

The meetings at first took place outside city hall, but because of variable weather conditions, Long asked Mayor Conley if they could move the meetings inside.

See Awake, 3A

Schmidt, Passmore honored with Carnegie Hero Medals

By Charles Duncan
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Tony Schmidt

Tony Schmidt and Brannon Passmore met each other before Wednesday, May 29, 2013.

As time moves forward, they'll never forget one another, and now, their heroics are well documented.

Schmidt, 52, of Hayesville, NC, and Passmore, 27, of Blairsville, each have been honored for their life-saving heroics in the Nottely River, off Georgia 515, with 2014 Carnegie Medals.

The medal is given throughout the United States and Canada to those who risk their lives to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the lives of others. Three of the 21 heroes lost their lives in the performance of their lifesaving acts.

Schmidt and Passmore join the 9,718 heroes that have earned awards since the Pittsburgh-based Fund's inception in 1904. Throughout the 110 years since industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie established the Fund, \$36.4 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance.

Schmidt and Passmore rescued a motorist trapped inside his vehicle underneath the murky waters of the Nottely River off Georgia 515.

"Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Passmore are the reason that young man was rescued," said Union County Fire and Rescue Lt. Jeff Fortenberry. "We didn't do anything compared to what they did."

According to Union County Sheriff Mack Mason, Schmidt and Passmore saved the life of then 29-year-old Nicholas Adam Yebba of Morganton after his black, 2002 PT Cruiser traveled



Brannon Passmore

across four lanes of Georgia 515, including the median, left the highway's north shoulder, went airborne and plunged into Nottely River.

Schmidt and Passmore, strangers to each other before Yebba's life became in peril in Nottely River, are now forever linked as lifesavers. Yebba, who was life-flighted to Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga, Tenn., survived the harrowing ordeal.

Both Schmidt and Passmore said they don't feel like heroes. Both said that if put in the same situation as Yebba, they just hope that there is

See Heroes, 2A

New Ivy Log Creek Bridge opens Thursday

By Charles Duncan
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Weather permitting, traffic will shift to the new bridge over Ivy Log Creek on Thursday, Oct. 16, according to GDOT. The new bridge cost \$3.6 million. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Surprise - the new bridge over Ivy Log Creek on the Jack C. Lance Memorial Highway is set to open on Thursday.

The 0.645-mile long bridge project was awarded to Talley Construction Company, Inc. of Rossville, for a contract price of \$3,578,685.77 with a completion date of Dec. 31.

Talley Construction blew that date out of the water.

"We are proud to finish this new bridge 2 and a half months early," said Georgia DOT District Engineer, Brent Cook. "Please use extra cau-

tion driving through the area as crews work to prepare for the traffic shift. Preparing is underway. The change will begin at 9 a.m. and finish by 4 p.m. Thursday.

"Once traffic is using the new bridge, the original 1940 bridge will be strategically demolished," Cook said. "The new bridge will have 11 feet wide lanes until demolition is complete to give the contractor more room to work in."

The existing bridge was built in 1940. The new bridge includes shoulders on both sides of the bridge and

See Bridge, 3A

Good Neighbors Classic Car Show on Saturday at UCB

North Georgia Motorcycle Show on Oct. 25 at North Georgia Technical College's Blairsville Campus

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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pected to last until 3 p.m. "It's a day of fun for car enthusiasts," said member Marcus Tuschel.

The history behind the Good Neighbors Auto Club is unique.

The club formed in the early 1980s with a mission, to maintain and preserve automotive history.

The group, made up of enthusiasts from Georgia and Western North Carolina, consisted of six charter members, three of which are still members today, Rufus Everett, Don Hughes and Ginger Abernathy.

The club's first car show was at Union County High School in 1984, followed by two years in front of the old

Milton Inn. "Then we were fortunate enough that United Community Bank let us use their facilities and we've been there ever since," said Frankie Hughes. "We've been there for 27 years."

The focus of the club is to use the annual car show as a fundraiser to collect money to give back to the communities it serves in the form of scholarships. The club gives out six scholarships to students in Northeast Georgia and Western North Carolina.

The club also gives out special gifts throughout the year to worthy causes that include, the food banks, the animal shelter, and the Civil Air Patrol, Tuschel said.



Good Neighbors Auto Club Classic Car Show begins at 9 a.m. on Saturday at United Community Bank. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

For more details, call Tuschel at (706) 835-9010, or Joe McGinnis at (706) 781-2805, or (864) 980-1616.

Meanwhile, over at North Georgia Technical College's Blairsville Campus, off Georgia 515, the 13th Annual North Georgia Motorcycle Show is back again on Oct. 25 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Organizer Dennis Bradley has been at the helm of this event since its inception.

The show features nine different classes that people can enter bikes in from modern up to vintage, Bradley said.

The event features sponsors, door prizes, and

See Shows, 3A

Vol. 105 No. 42
2 Sections, 24 Pages

Weather
Thu: Clouds Hi 60 Lo 46
Fri: Sunny Hi 73 Lo 52
Sat: Sunny Hi 73 Lo 46

Inside
Arrests 8A
Churches 9A
Classifieds 2B
Opinion 4A
Legals 4B
Obits 11A
Sports 14A

HAUNTED FIRE STATION #10

See Page 8A

VIETNAM VETERAN

Chapter 1101 Meeting October 16th

See Page 8A

Whiskers Project needs Volunteers

See Page 11A

Veterans Day Program

November 1th

See Page 13A

UCHS Football
Fri 10/17 vs. Rabun Co. 7:30 PM

UCHS Softball
Class AA Tournament
Darlington vs. Union
Doubleheader 4:30 & 6:30

IV Football
Thurs 10/16 vs. White Co. 5:30 PM