

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Union County combined tax rate fifth lowest in the state

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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weeks. Those resolutions are required before the state grants final approval of the county's Tax Digest.

The county tax rate dropped percentage points, the School Board and City of Blairsville tax rates will remain the same for the new tax bills.

"We don't have the exact figures because obviously all 159 counties have not completed their millage rates, but we expect to be at least the fifth lowest combined millage rate among all 159 counties," Paris said. "We could be lower, it is all dependent on what the other counties do."

"We're proud to keep our tax rate among the lowest combined rates in the state," Paris said. "It's going to be



Mayor Jim Conley

tough on us financially next year, but we made the decision that the public is still hurting. If nothing happens, we'll finish the year with a reserve balance."

Commissioner Paris shaved the county's millage



Gary Steppe

rate from 5.419 to 5.410 for the upcoming year on Thursday afternoon, Oct. 11; the Union County School Board kept the BOE millage rate at 11.798 Thursday morning, Oct. 11, and the city rate stayed at 2.00 per council vote on Oct. 2.

According to Commissioner Paris, the county based



Commissioner Lamar Paris

its new millage rate on what the budget will be for Fiscal 2013.

"It's a savings of \$17,000 annually," Paris said, deferring the millage rate decrease. "We won't adopt our budget until the end of

the year. It's a feat not to raise taxes and continue to provide the services that we're providing."

Earlier in the day, the Union County Board of Education voted unanimously to keep the current millage rate of 11.798 for the upcoming year. At a 95 percent collection rate, keeping the millage rate at 11.798 results in a \$20,000 shortfall, Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe said.

"Right now there are 14 schools statewide who are running a deficit and that number could go over 80 before the end of this year," Steppe said. "So when you think about it, we're in pretty good shape compared to the

See Tax Rate, Page 2A

Jaycees' 43rd Sorghum Festival shines

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer



The 43rd Annual Sorghum Festival wasn't just about making syrup. There was lots of fun for children of all ages at Meeks Park. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Bridges has remained an active participant dating back to the infant stages of the Festival. "You're talking to one of the men that started this," Bridges said. "Me, my grandpa, and my dad helped start this years ago down on the side of Highway 76 where the tractor place used to be and where the drug store is now." After the laborious process involved in produc-

ing syrup from sorghum, the Bridges family would take their handiwork to the town square for sale. It wasn't until former Jaycee President Sonny Freeman had a notion about turning a small family business into what we now call the Sorghum Festival. "Sonny Freeman and myself helped come up with the idea," Bridges said. "I told him that it would be too

much work but we'll try it. We just took off from there and it has done really well." The old Fort Sorghum went through two renovations before the Festival was eventually moved to Meeks Park. "We had to build that fort twice," Bridges said. "We originally built a smaller one, then the Festival grew and we

See Sorghum, Page 6A

Cassidy Davis crowned 2012 UCHS Homecoming Queen

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer



Cassidy Davis

Cassidy Davis lived every girl's dream on Friday night.

That moment of truth, the longest minute in a high school girl's life, came to fruition for Davis as she was the one of 14 members of the 2012 Union County High Homecoming Court to hear her name called over a blaring sound system.

A sobbing Davis, wiped tears from her face as Meghan Barnett, the 2011 UCHS Homecoming Queen placed the 2012 crown upon her head.

The senior, with her father Rusty Davis standing by her side, had become the blushing, 2012 UCHS Homecoming Queen.

Cassidy Davis, edged out First Runner-Up senior

Katie Rittenhouse and Second Runner-Up senior Lorene Irvin for the right to wear the crown as UCHS Homecoming Queen 2012.

Cassidy Davis, also a Union County High school cheerleader, burst into tears as her name was announced over the Public Address system as the new Union County Home-

See Queen, Page 3A

Sorghum Parade draws a big crowd

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer



The annual Sorghum Festival Parade was all about community pride on Saturday in Blairsville. The event included Boy Scouts, the marching band, beauty queens and down home fun. Photo/Todd Forrest

The champ comes to Blairsville

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer



Evander Holyfield

If you thought you saw a famous, yet familiar face at the Union County-Riverside Military Academy football contest on Friday night, well, you did.

After all, it was Homecoming Night, and one could expect royalty to be among the crowd.

The only four-time Heavyweight Boxing Champion of the World was on the Eagles' sideline in the first half and in the stands during the second half of the Panthers' 41-13 Region 8-AA victory.

Evander "Real Deal" Holyfield was in attendance as the Eagles took on the Panthers in a Region 8-AA football contest.

Holyfield's son, Elijah Holyfield, a freshman running back for Riverside, was the

reason the champ was making his first appearance in Blairsville.

Elijah Holyfield broke a 76-yard touchdown run the previous week against Rabun County.

"There are a lot of nice folks in Blairsville," Evander Holyfield said during a fourth quarter interview with the

See Champ, Page 3A

Hometown Halloween on Oct. 27

By Janice Boling
North Georgia News
Staff Writer



Hometown Halloween on the Downtown Square in Blairsville.

It's harvest time, fall is in the air, and it's time to celebrate.

Hometown Halloween on the Square is on Saturday, Oct. 27th from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Come join the fun and give out treats to the kids. Table space is available for \$10.

Don't forget that boxes will be available for donation to the Union County Food Pantry. Let's fill them up.

For more information about reserving a space, please contact Janet Hartman at (706) 994-4837.

Homecoming Parade inspires

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer



The Homecoming Parade was a chance to celebrate all things Union County on Friday. Photo/Todd Forrest

The earthquake felt around North Georgia late Friday night that measured 2.5 on the Richter Scale, could have been a result of all the swagger resonating out of Union County during its Homecoming weekend.

Last Friday was a purple and golden opportunity for the community to reconnect with all things Union County Panthers during Homecoming.

From football players, cross country runners, the

See Homecoming, Page 3A

Vol. 103 No. 42
2 Sections, 32 Pages
Weather
Wed: Clouds Hi 71 Lo 50
Thur: Showers Hi 65 Lo 44
Friday Clouds Hi 64 Lo 42

Inside
Arrests 19A
Church 14A
Classified 7B
Opinion 4A
Legal 9B
Obits 16A
Sports 10A

See page 9A

28th Annual Good Neighbors Auto Club Classic Car Show
October 20th • 9 a.m.
United Community Bank

See page 9A

Last Classic Car Show & Car Give Away
Saturday, October 20
4 p.m.
Old Courthouse Square
See page 9A

Official Election Ballot for Nov. 6 Election
See page 13A

Hometown Halloween on the Square
Sat., Oct. 27
5:30-7:30 p.m.
See page 7A

UCHS Football
Friday, Oct. 19 • 7:30pm
@ Greene Co.

JV Football
Thursday, Oct. 18 • 5:30pm
@ Rabun Co.