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Dr. John Barge said the problem has to do with control and allocation of funds, adding that he is for public education.

Dr. Barge said that when the state stipulates certain rules and reallocates local funding, that's not public education. Bottom line: if the charter amendment passes in November, local communities will lose their voice.

According to Barge, it will take local control away from the community and will take money out of the local schools' pockets.

In an economy where Georgia's local school systems are already taking tremendous financial hits, the Union County Board of Education took a stand against the proposed amendment by approving a resolution in support of quality public education.

The signed resolution, which has been forwarded as an official document to Gov. Nathan Deal, the Georgia Board of Education, the Georgia Department of Education, and state lawmakers, declares that the Union County board members request that Gov. Deal and state lawmakers commit their sup-

port to adequately funding a first class K-12 public education for students in Union County and across the State of Georgia.

The Board also asks that local voters turn out at the polls and vote 'no' regarding Amendment I, the constitutional amendment that allows the state to create charter schools without local school board approval.

A 'yes' vote on this proposed constitutional amendment re-opens the door that restores the state charter schools commission, a group that would be empowered to establish charter schools in local communities, whether or not the local board agrees.

Advocates of the legislation say that state charters are intended to give families options for education, not obstruct local school boards.

District 50 State Sen. John Wilkinson, a former public school educator, said the citizens of Georgia will make the ultimate decision regarding the adoption of HB 1162.

"I have great confidence in the collective wisdom of the Georgia voters and I urge everyone to study this issue,

make an informed decision, and go vote," Sen. Wilkinson said.

District 51 State Sen. Steve Gooch supports passage of Amendment I.

"By law, state and local school boards already have the authority to approve charter schools; however, local school boards often routinely deny charter proposals presented to them for approval. This is an issue of control," Sen. Gooch said.

"If the local board denies the charter application, the petitioner will have the opportunity to come to the state commission for approval," he said. "The commission only approves the school and holds it accountable. The state will not run state-approved charter schools - locals will.

"Allowing a local school to have a monopoly on this decision is like allowing the McDonald's in town to decide if Chick-fil-A will be allowed to open a new store down the block. It's simply not good business," Sen. Gooch said. "If students don't perform, the school will close, unlike many traditional public schools whose students are failing."

Crime Wave...continued from Page 1A

The records turned up the 40-year-old Loflin, who was paroled from state prison Feb. 3rd, Georgia Department of Correction records show.

Since August 1995, Loflin has been convicted and sentenced to 105 years in state prison for 11 felony crimes in four counties that include burglary, forgery, possession of tools of a crime and criminal damage to property, state crime records show.

In that same time frame, he's served seven years and six months of those 105 years, according to the Department of Corrections.

Loflin lived within walking distance of several of the burglaries, Union County Sheriff's Detective Lt. Rick Landress said.

The most heinous crime authorities believe he committed - stealing the children's offering from Blairsville Church of God, Lt. Landress said.

"It was like \$200 in cash and coins," Lt. Landress said. "It devastated the church and its pastor, John Davis."

The church break in was realized on Oct. 15. The church leaders knew that one of the major items missing was the church's safe which held the Sunday collections and critical financial documents.

Pastor Davis' wife Dinah called him in Atlanta to

alert him that the church had been compromised by a thief or thieves. She also called Union County 911 and sheriff's Detective Lamar Dyer. Four other detectives arrived at the crime scene, Pastor Davis said.

"The only item taken was the safe with Sunday's donation and other critical financial documents and check books inside. Needless to say, our church was devastated," Pastor Davis said. "We have pastored this church for eight years and this is the first occurrence of a break-in. We felt totally violated as the intruder ransacked our offices.

"The intruder used one of the altars in the church to slide the safe down the stairs to his waiting vehicle at the side door of the church," Pastor Davis said. "They also opened our children's offering that were on a desk and removed the coins, leaving the tithe envelope on the secretary's desk. Our church began to intercede and pray for not only the intruder and their arrest and removal from our beautiful community, but for the trauma of our members as well."

Ironically, the theft of the church's safe led to Loflin's arrest, Lt. Landress said.

"The suspect is on parole, and part of that agreement is waiving his 4th

Amendment Rights regarding search and seizure," Lt. Landress said. "When we asked him to search his premises, he objected to the search of a barn. That's where we found the church safe."

Loflin's alleged crime wave led to the creation of a new Crime Suppression Unit by the Sheriff's Office to solve crime waves like the multiple commercial break ins, Sheriff Stephens said.

The crack unit cracked the string of multiple commercial break ins.

"We'll use this group in the future to continue to solve crimes against property and persons," the sheriff said. "We're proud to have cleared up these commercial thefts and I'm proud of the folks that help bring closure to the victims involved."

The Blairsville Church of God is proud, grateful and thankful to the Union County Sheriff's Office and "their fine deputies for their excellent work," Pastor Davis said.

"Not only are they professional, courteous and efficient, they allow God to lead them in the exercise of their duties," Pastor Davis said. "We are blessed to pastor a church in this great community and we are also blessed to have such wonderful men and women in law enforcement in our community."

Teachers...continued from Page 1A

tion ceremony.

There are more than 97,000 retired educators in Georgia of which more than 22,000 are members of the Georgia Retired Educators Association.

Retired educators donate thousands of hours of volunteer service and continue to make invaluable contributions to the welfare of their respective communities.

Members of the Union County Retired Educators Association participated in a proclamation signing with Commissioner Paris on Thursday, Oct. 25th.

The Union County Retired Educators Association is an affiliate of the Georgia Re-

tired Educators Association and all retired educators are invited to join this local unit.

"The retired educators have devoted their time, energies, and talents to public education, providing the educational development of millions of outstanding Georgia citizens. Retired educators touched and influenced the lives of generations of young people and motivated and inspired them to use their innate talents and abilities to the fullest and to become responsible and contributing citizens," the proclamation reads.

"Retired educators possess valuable knowledge and use their lifetime experiences and skills to enrich the educa-

tional process in a variety of settings. Often they continue to be a major source of insight and direction for our state and our nation. Many return as classroom assistants or substitute teachers while many serve on local boards of education. For more than 49 years, the Georgia Retired Educators Association has dedicated its efforts to improving the welfare of retired educators and has provided opportunities for them to become involved in community activities. All citizens of Georgia owe a debt of gratitude and appreciation to retired educators for their dedicated service to our state, nation, and county," the proclamation reads.

Motorcycle show at North Georgia Tech Campus

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

North Georgia Technical College's Blairsville Campus played host to the 11th annual North Georgia Motorcycle Show.

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

"We have nine different classes that people can enter bikes in from modern up to vintage," Bradley said.

Despite being a cool and cloudy morning, the event was still considered a success by Bradley.

"We've got Christian Motorcycle Association over there with free coffee, got a food vendor selling barbecue and drinks," he said.

Vintage bikes must be 25 years or older, Bradley said.

"We've got custom class, modern American, vintage American, modern Japanese, vintage Japanese, modern European, vintage European, competition (bikes for racing), and special interest," he said. "The event has been held at NGTC every year. It's a people's choice, you get a ballot and you go around and each bike has a number on it and you vote on the bikes.

In the end, the votes were tallied for each of the nine classes of bikes.

The winners for each class were: Custom Class, First Place:



Dennis Bradley and one of the many bikes on display. Photo/Todd Forrest

Sherrill Hogsted; Second Place, Darren Groves; Third Place Darren Groves.

Modern American, First Place, Gene Evans; Second Place, Tom Orchaniack; Third Place Marty Duncan.

Vintage American, First Place, Bill Wood; Second Place, Michael Collins; Third Place, Tom Tryzbiak.

Modern Japanese - First Place Frank Alexander; Second Place John Sheperd; and Third Place Jeff Knight.

Vintage Japanese, First Place Steve McPhee; Second Place Derek Josack; Third Place Dennis Bradley.

Place Frank Alexander; Second Place Bob Hancock; Third Place Jim Russell.

Vintage European, First Place Ron Arnold; Second Place Jim Russell; Third Place Frank Alexander.

Competition, First Place, Dennis Bradley; Second Place, Hal Wengel; Third Place John Mincey.

Special Interest, First Place, Chief & Dove Smith; Second Place, Jerry Peoples; Third Place Anthony Cassulo.

The show was sponsored by a number of local businesses and many thanks to them. Special thanks to go out to North Georgia Technical College's Blairsville Campus.