

North Georgia News

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UCSO deputy saves two lives in fire on Thanksgiving Day

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Thanks to the bravery and quick thinking of a Union County Sheriff's Deputy, two county residents survived a Thanksgiving Day house fire that could have ended in tragedy.

"One of my deputies, Shane Burnette, he was on routine patrol when he observed a house fire," said UCISO Shift Sgt. Julio Cruz. "He advised dispatch of the location. He started knocking on all the doors and windows to see if there was anyone there. He went into the house, and he finally ended up busting out a window and helping a 64-year-old man

through one of the windows, escorting him away from the house."

Deputy Burnette, still concerned that more people might be trapped in the home, asked the man he had just gotten to safety if there was anyone else in the house.

"The man said he wasn't sure, but if there was, they would be in the rear end of the house," said Sgt. Cruz. "So Deputy Burnette went around the house, yelling and banging on the windows and doors. He finally heard a girl scream, so he went ahead and busted out another window with his baton, and he was yelling for the girl but she said she couldn't see because of all the smoke."

Deputy Burnette, exhibiting great calm,



Shane Burnette

instructed the young girl to hold out her hands and walk toward the sound of his voice.

"As soon as he saw her hands, he grabbed her, helped her through the window, and

carried her away from the fire until the fire department got there," said Sgt. Cruz. "It was pretty extraordinary."

Deputy Burnette spotted the fire during one of his routine patrols in the south end of the county at approximately 8:30 a.m. that Thanksgiving Day morning, while the two residents were still sleeping. Had he not witnessed the blaze and rescued them, it's probable that the two would have perished in the fire, according to Union County Fire Chief David Dyer.

"He was very brave and quick-thinking, and he was very instrumental in saving those folks," said Chief Dyer. "Everybody is here to help,

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UC Historical Society rings in the yuletide



Joanne Sales with Historical Society Christmas tree

By Shawn Jarrard
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Staff Writer

Those looking to embrace a little holiday cheer out in the community this weekend will have plenty of opportunities thanks to the Union County Historical Society. On Friday, Dec. 4, the

ever popular annual Christmas concert put on by the North Georgia Chamber Symphony will return to the Historic Union County Courthouse at 7 p.m. on the Downtown Blairsville Square. Patrons of the free event can expect to hear

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DDA Manager Harper: 'ramp on schedule and under budget'



Haralson project well underway

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The development of the new off-ramp to connect GA 515 in a new four-way stop

at Young Harris Street and Pat Haralson Drive nearer the Downtown Blairsville Square is both on schedule and under budget.

"Those are two of the best

things you could ever ask for on a road construction project," said Darren Harper, program manager for the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority. "The rain slowed us down a little bit, but (Colwell Construction) have more than made up for it. The road is compacted in such a way that, yes it gets soggy on the top, but they can just move that dirt and then it's dry underneath, because it's so compacted."

Curbs have been staked out and will continue to see work this week, and the project is on track to finish tentatively by Christmas - at least, that's what Harper hopes, if the weather cooperates.

Once the new off-ramp is usable, the old ramp will be closed off.

"The state will deed that old off-ramp back to the city, but we could only use it for public use," said Harper, at which point the space will likely be converted into parking for the downtown area.

After the ramp is complete and usable, the next step will be to attract developers to the area to purchase lots in the new extension space made available to Downtown Blairsville.

"Mitch Griggs, Director of the Union County Development Authority, is still actively pursuing developers and potential buyers for the lots that will fund the rest of the project," said Harper.

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Union County man in jail on aggravated child molestation charges

By Shawn Jarrard
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A 67-year-old Union County man is in jail, charged with enticing a child for indecent purposes, aggravated child molestation, sexual battery, two counts of battery and two counts of obstructing an officer.

Detectives with the Union County Sheriff's Office are trying to determine if Robert Lewis Ingraham may have other victims who have not come forward.

Ingraham was arrested at the Wendy's Restaurant in Blairsville at 3:15 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 23, following an investigation conducted by Det. Sgt. Tom Mangifesta of



Robert L. Ingraham the Union County Sheriff's Office.

According to the investigation, Ingraham is originally from upstate New York, though he has been living in the Choestoe Falls RV Park for the last 17 years.

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UCHS attendance initiative shows great results

By Shawn Jarrard
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Staff Writer

Union County High School has rewarded students for perfect attendance for the second time this school year as part of a new attendance initiative program.

Every six weeks, students with perfect attendance are entered into a drawing for some pretty neat rewards, including one grand prize winner of a new laptop computer, along with lunch at the restaurant of their choosing for those whose names were drawn.

This go-round, the hardworking students who were rewarded for their perfect attendance were: junior Alyssa Adams, who also won the laptop; senior William Ballew; freshman Sarah Cook; freshman Lauraleigh Miller; freshman Kelli Tritt; and freshman Issa Tritt.

"Every one of them are great kids," said UCHS



Principal John Hill. "They exemplify the things that we want here - good work ethic, great attitudes."

According to figures from last year, Hill said

the attendance program is working just as he and fellow administrators had hoped.

"Our attendance is better this year than it was last year, with fewer tardies at school -

it seems to be effective and seems to be helping the kids out," said Hill. "The thing to remember is that the goal of this is to embed those work-

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There's much to be thankful for at Antioch Baptist

By Shawn Jarrard
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For four years now, Antioch Baptist Church has provided Thanksgiving Day meals for people who might otherwise have gone without, and for those involved, the blessing goes both ways.

Among those who benefited from the Thanksgiving Day meal were members of Christian Love Ministries, the S.A.F.E. House, as well as those who take part in the church's food ministry called There's Hope for the Hungry.

"We start about two months early announcing it, asking for donations," said Candy McCaffity, one of the founders of the Thanksgiving

Day ministry at Antioch. "It's all church donations, and church people cook and bring the food. So really, this is brought in here and we just get it ready to serve. The whole church congregation participates in one way or another."

More than 40 church volunteers helped to prepare all the food - from savory dressing to mouthwatering turkey and all the fixings in between - and helpers lined up to serve the more than 75 in attendance as well as those who had plates delivered, like the S.A.F.E. House.

"Some of the people that are signing down here right now we see every month in our There's Hope for the Hungry ministry," said Rev. George



Dinner is served at Antioch Baptist Church

Cline, who has been pastor of Antioch Baptist Church for 18 years now. "Knowing their financial situation, sometimes it's either buy medicine or buy

food, buy propane or buy food. They're on very limited incomes, and so we try to help them out every month, and

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Buy local for big holiday savings with Jingle Bell Buys

By Shawn Jarrard
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One of the best ways for residents to support their community is by shopping local, which is the main drive behind Jingle Bell Buys in the Mountains.

Residents can take advantage of great savings at area businesses through the Jingle Bell Buys program,

and it runs Thursday, Dec. 3, through Saturday, Dec. 5.

"Jingle Bell Buys is a program that we've done for several years now through the chamber, and the goal of the program is to encourage people to consider shopping local for the holiday season," said Cindy Williams, president of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of

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Union County Sheriff's Give-A-Gift for Christmas



By Shawn Jarrard
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The Union County Sheriff's Office is asking the community for help with its 15th Annual Give-A-Gift, a program ensuring that children of Union County ages 3 through 12 have wonderful Christmas mornings.

"We want to thank

everyone in advance for their participation, their help on this," said Union County Sheriff Mack Mason. "This is a worthy cause, and we thank everyone for everything that they've done in the past for us and what they're going to do this year."

The sheriff's office is always quick to embrace Christmastime for children of

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Kris Kringle Market
UC Farmers Market
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& Sat. Dec. 5th

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BASKETBALL
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Fri. Dec. 4 vs. Towns Co 7 & 8:30 PM
AT THE PIT