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as you should be.

Q. What road improvements have been made at the Pat Colwell Road intersection?

A. First, the section of highway was completely redone in 2009 with a turning lane added from the Pat Haralson Intersection to the Pat Colwell intersection. This improvement came from a request I made back in 2003 as there were more wrecks at these two intersections than any other part of the county. It took six years, but it eventually happened. Since the road widening and a turning lane installed in nearly every direction, the accidents have been reduced drastically. Second, the visibility to the North from Pat Colwell Road has been vastly improved because of the grading that was done by the county to remove a large portion of the bank that was impeding visibility.

With these improvements this intersection is much safer than it used to be and the accident rate is lower even with higher traffic volumes. Unfortunately, there was a fatality at this intersection a couple of years ago, but that was not related to the absence of a red light, according to accident reports. Still, the most difficult remaining traffic movement at the intersection is a left turn from Pat Colwell onto Hwy 19/129 North and it requires patience and care.

Q. What issues are the county and GDOT currently dealing with in Union County other than the Pat Colwell intersection?

A. There are several different issues that we are working on with GDOT.

1. At my insistence for the past couple of years, GDOT did recently complete the slow traffic pull off lanes on the back side of Neal's Gap going toward Cleveland. This will be a huge help and I appreciate their work on this.

2. GDOT is currently working with us, though rather slowly, designing changes for the Wal-Mart Intersections. Several options are being considered including speed limit reduction, turn arrows, cross-over blockers, and other op-

tions that are available. The sad part is that nearly every accident is due to driver distraction or carelessness. Since we know this is a dangerous area and if you are driving through there on the way to Blue Ridge or Atlanta, even though the speed limit is 65 mph, please slow down as you drive through these intersections and be extra alert watching other traffic to be sure they are doing what they should.

3. While this is strictly a GDOT project without any input from us, the Young Harris highway is slated for widening into a four lane by 2020 or 2021, which will begin by completing surveying, design work, and acquiring right of way in 2017 and 2018.

4. There are always turning lanes being added as new businesses are added along State highways.

5. We have been working with GDOT on the installation of a weather station with cameras on top of Neal's Gap.

6. Requests have been made for more LMIG funds for increasing resurfacing of major county roads and we are very optimistic about this.

7. We have also been cooperating with them and the school working on a new entrance to the Agriculture Center off the Gainesville Highway.

8. Intersections, such as Gumlog, are routinely inspected for the possibility of future red lights.

9. Also, GDOT will be striping the turning lane west bound on Hwy 515 where you turn onto the Old Blue Ridge Highway, but here again, we put in a request several weeks ago and it just takes time because there are a lot of other towns and counties in our district having their own issues.

10. We have requested that resurfacing the Richard Russell Hwy. portion from near the bottom of the mountain up to Hog Pen Gap at the White County line be considered this coming year.

So you see that while GDOT handles their own projects, there are some areas that we can work together and they have been very good to work with us, it just takes time.

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However, they knew there would be a severe penalty if they got caught. So, the group silently slipped back to the log truck and new car. There was no room to turn the vehicles around for quite a ways down the road. So, the two vehicles drove down the road in reverse. Jimmy was backing his car down the road when he heard someone hollering. Thinking he was caught he panicked and stepped on the accelerator. His car crashed into the log truck and crumpled up his back bumper. Later, he told Aunt Mable

that a drunk had hit his car while he was still at school. He also told her that the Birmingham police would not even investigate his accident. She was so upset she spent a week in Birmingham fussing at the police about her little boy's car.

Meanwhile, Uncle C. L. was at Ebb Trapp's store bragging to anyone who would listen that the police couldn't catch him on the night of "The Raid". Yes, he had close to 100 stitches and cuts all over his body. But, he got away from the law.

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that the agency charged with stopping terrorists has as many as 72 of its own employees on a terror watch list. Imagine that. Lynch told Boston Public Radio that: "Back in August, we did an investigation—the inspector general did—of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and they had 72 individuals that were on the terrorist watch list that were actually working at the Department of Homeland Security."

The female shooter in the recent California carnage was interviewed three times by the DHS before being approved for a visa to enter our country. Well, "Slap my head again!" Who better to interrogate a terrorist than another terrorist!

So, how does the gov-

ernment find a-needle-in-a-haystack? Start by collecting a room full of impolitic bureaucrats to discuss global warming. Cool the haystack before you begin the search. To do this, you put a ban on soup beans and political speeches. This will eliminate toxic gas from two areas with dramatic results. Second you implement full gun control. Don't want anybody shot while in the hay pile searching. And third you throw more hay on the pile. You can now tell the lame brain media that you need more taxpayer money to remove excess hay.

Not only is this bird flying backward it's building its nest upside down.

Ed Huber

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mission on November 17th, offering a solution to the growing problem. The Bandalong Litter Trap, made locally by Storm Water Systems, has been installed throughout the world with over 250 successful installations. Hopkins provided information about the Bandalong Litter Trap and offered to lease the one to the City of Helen. Local businesses, Unicoi Outfitters and Trout Unlimited expressed support by agreeing to work together on a solution. Unicoi Outfitters' Jimmy Harris stated, "No one realizes the extent of the trash washed from the City... we are morally bound to stop this instead of looking for the easiest way to clean it up."

Another product produced by Storm Water Systems, Inc. is StormX™ a contraption that is engineered to capture gross pollutants and handle powerful storm water runoff at most urban hot spots. Commercial grade, reusable nets provide full capture of gross pollutants as small as 5 mm, including organic materials (such as leaves) that could

reduce the levels of phosphorous and nitrogen in our water. This economical solution to litter and debris in storm water runoff is highly effective for "first flush." To prevent flooding in sewerage plants, built-in overflows allow heavy runoff to flow unimpeded.

StormX has a proven track record of success with zero failures for more than 15 years. Bandalong Boom Systems™ is another product that is installed across waterways, acting as a final barrier to collect or deflect debris. The floating boom sections are coupled together and spanned across a weir, waterway or dam to capture litter and prevent it from floating further downstream. Floating boom sections are coupled together to span across waterways. The boom sections are manufactured from exceptionally strong and durable polyethylene pipe and are equipped with anti-vandal fittings and have a rubber sleeve over the joint to stop any litter escaping through the joint

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I have no idea what my "best intentions" were a year ago. I didn't write them down, and if I did, the backside got used for a quick grocery list before the day of the Epiphany, and then got tossed in the trash. It's this year end ritual where we start to formulate how the next twelve months will be different than the last calendar year, and even different than the last two dozen years. Some of us take on the biggest challenges of our lives on January 1. Except this year, the first of the month starts on a Saturday, the weekend. The efforts we have primed for will wait until the 3rd day of the new year, to be forgotten by the 10th, giving us some satisfaction that our pains lasted a bit longer than usual.

This week the newspaper, as well as social media, will have pictures of those who have been better stewards of their time to share on this earth. They sang carols at the retirement home, collected toys for underprivileged children, or were honored for volunteering over 100 hours in 2015 to the local animal shelter. They did all this while we were deciding if we should buy Mom a Keurig machine for Christmas.

Fowler ...

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for peace. The growth of ISIS is barbaric and their Christian program in the Middle East is genocidal. The civil war in Syria has given the world its greatest refugee crisis since WWII.

The preacher adds that God has also made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart. With trust in God's time, we embrace or overcome, build on or move on from 2015. The past, present, and future form the timeframe of our lives, and per Dickens, "I will not shut out the lessons that they teach!" We receive eternity in Christ Jesus, and pray the Father's Kingdom come, and His will be done.

Williams ...

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paign, a campaign that focuses on the great aspects of living and working in Blairsville-Union County. As we move toward the implementation phase in 2016, we are excited about the possible outcomes and the attraction of new business.

Over the past year the Chamber introduced many new programs including our grand dinner event, An Evening With The STARS to recognize those individuals who shine brightly in our schools, businesses, and community. We successfully hosted the July 4th fireworks display and added our first ever VIP Parking experience. Our staff continues to serve on a number of committees for the betterment of Union County including the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority, Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games, Appalachian Trail Community, Union County Interagency Group, Northeast Georgia Board of Realtors Affiliate, and the Northeast Georgia Mountain Travel Association to name a few.

Always tackling new initiatives and incorporating the use of technology, we have proudly served over 10,000 visitors in 2015 alone and had over 170,000 website hits, an increase of 15% over 2014. Most certainly, without the assistance of the Chamber of Commerce, these individuals would likely have missed many of the wonderful attractions, restaurants, shops, and services in our community. A strong Chamber means greater community impact and more dollars spent in Union County.

In addition to the membership, another key component of success within our organization is the leadership. I would like to say a special thanks to Patrick Malone of The PAR Group who completes his three year Board term this month. It is directly because of the vision, knowledge and involvement of Patrick and the entire Board that we are able to boast such a great organization.

If you are interested in learning more about any aspect of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, I invite you to contact us at 706-745-5789. Here's to a great 2015 and even better 2016!

section. An aluminum mesh skirt under the bottom of the pipe traps any submerged litter or logs. We are a throw-away society, but we just don't need to throw it in the streams and waterways, but if we do Bandalong Litter Trap can catch it.

For more information on Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council, contact Frank Riley, Executive Director at: frank.ccred@gmail.com.

We don't know if she'll ever understand how it works, and quite frankly, we don't seem to have the time to help her figure these things out.

I think what I've finally learned over the years is that good intentions should be acted upon at any time, not left for the clock to strike midnight. Visiting family across the miles shouldn't be left for when someone has a milestone to celebrate. If you had a teacher or a mentor in your life who you have heard is infirmed back in your hometown, don't wait to send them a Christmas card. Send a note now. If you didn't get around to making that gingerbread apron for the little girl down the street that stopped by the house to bring you a bouquet of buttercups last summer, make it this winter and invite her over for hot chocolate. She won't care that it has candy canes on the fabric.

You just paid your property taxes and you noticed how significant the school taxes were. Maybe it's time to start participating in the school system. See a basketball game this season. Better yet, see a JV game. They need the extra support. Visit the new performing arts center for one of their productions or musical concerts. Stop donating all your junk to the thrift store and ask if you can volunteer a few hours a month sorting out the donations they've already have received. Go through your pantry and take all the boxed and canned goods you bought with good intentions to fix for the past three holidays, and drop it off at the food pantry.

Yes, it is easier said than done. You are overwhelmed with career responsibilities, or maybe you are exhausted with hours of caregiving or health issues of your own. When you can't do anything but sit in your recliner because it all seems too much to tackle, find the strength to pick up the phone and dial the person across the miles that you most want to give and/or receive encouragement, love and shared memories. It is just such a call that will set you on the path of one more accomplishment on that path of good intentions.

And just a reminder to those of you who intend to finally attend the Farmers Market on Saturdays- just 24 weeks to go before we start our 2016 season.

Happy, joyous, healthy New Year, everyone.