

North Georgia News

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Judge Struble rules city sign ordinance unconstitutional

Council declares 90-day moratorium on sign permits in city

By Charles Duncan
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Residents in the city of Blairsville have entered a new era in the history of their small community, one that involves zoning without having zoning.

Senior Judge Robert Struble ruled last Tuesday that the city of Blairsville failed in its attempt at a sign ordinance, and awarded partial summary judgment to Allison Outdoor Advertising, Limited Partners.

"What Judge Struble is saying is that procedurally, the ordinance wasn't adopted correctly," Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley said. "We don't want

to issue any more permits until we resolve this."

The council enacted a 90-day moratorium on sign permits last week during a called meeting at City Hall.

The events leading up to Judge Struble's decision all stems from two signs Allison Outdoor Advertising wanted to erect in the city of Blairsville. According to Superior Court documents, the company owns a few existing signs in the city limits, but, they're already sold out. The company contends that a demand from local advertisers required more billboard inventory, thus, its desire to erect more billboards.

Enter the Blairsville City Council and their desire to be able to see the city, not the billboards. The council wished to limit the amount of billboards in the Downtown Development District because of its historic nature.

The two sides couldn't see eye-to-eye, nor could they come to an agreement.

The council denied the sign applications based on its decision that the proposed signs to be erected violated the city's sign ordinance.

The billboard company was fairly certain that the city had not properly installed its sign ordinance. The fact was that it didn't. Thus evolved a law suit

involving Allison Outdoor Advertising, Limited Partners versus the city of Blairsville and its city council.

Judge Struble ruled the city's sign ordinance unconstitutional.

He quickly ruled in the company's favor, simply because a sign ordinance meets the criteria of a zoning ordinance. Judge Struble ruled that the city did not satisfy the public notice or public hearing requirements prior to its approval of its sign ordinance.

Judge Struble also ruled that the city must allow Allison

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Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley reads the Superior Court ruling by Senior Judge Robert Struble overturning the city's sign ordinance. Photo/Charles Duncan

Confederate veterans remembered at Memorial

By Todd Forrest
Staff Writer
North Georgia News

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, David W. Payne Camp No. 1633 held their annual remembrance of Confederate Memorial Day over the weekend at the Blairsville War Memorial.

The ceremony opened with a call to order and the welcoming of guests, dignitaries, and executive members. Following the introduction Chaplain Ed Massengale gave the invocation and gave recognition to the charter members: Compatriot Bill Barrett and Compatriot Pete White - who conducted the Pledges to the Flags.

The first was the pledge to the American Flag, then the pledge to the Georgia State Flag, and finally the salute to the Confederate Flag.

White continued with the charge of Gen. Stephen D. Lee that was given in New Orleans, LA in 1906: "To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we will submit the vindication of the cause for which we fought; To your strength will be given the

defense of the Confederate soldier's good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, and the perpetuation of those principles he loved and which made him glorious and which you also cherish. Remember: It is your duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations"

He would continue to tell a brief history of Gen. S.D. Lee - one of the founding members of the United Confederate Veterans. He was the youngest Confederate Lieutenant General during the Civil War, and later served as the first president of Mississippi State University.

Late in life, Lee was the commander-in-chief of the United Confederate Veterans. He became Commander in Chief of the United Confederate Veterans in 1904.

Lee died in 1908 and was replaced by W.L. Cabell.

A successor organization, the Sons of Confederate Veterans was formed by sons of United Confederate Veterans

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Operation Pill Drop a local success

By Charles Duncan
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Union County Sheriff Scott Stephens waited patiently outside Wal-Mart on Saturday as the bi-annual Operation Pill Drop box began to fill up.

From 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. residents could bring their unused prescription medication to the box to properly dispose of the drugs. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Union County Sheriff's Office teamed up for the DEA's National "Pill Drop."

The day wasn't all about disposing of unused medicine.

Sheriff Stephens assisted one Wal-Mart customer with helping to get her vehicle unlocked after she accidentally locked her keys inside. He talked with residents about happenings in the community and accepted donations on behalf of the Children's Christmas Fund.

"That's what we're here for," Sheriff Stephens said, referring to answering questions from residents and making a difference for young people.

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Union County Sheriff Scott Stephens listens to a local resident during Saturday's Operation Pill Drop. Photo/Charles Duncan

Williams named assistant superintendent

By Charles Duncan
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The Union County School System has a new assistant superintendent.

The Union County Board of Education has selected Dr. Jeremy Williams, Piedmont RESA's director of Evaluation and Assessment as its new second-in-command.

Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe said that the school system is fortunate to have Dr. Williams aboard.



Dr. Jeremy Williams

"He's a bright, bright young man," Steppe said.

Dr. Williams, who has a bachelor of science from North Georgia College and

State University in Dahlonega with a major in physics, comes highly touted throughout regional education circles for his professional skill set and intelligence.

Dr. Williams has a specialist's degree in teaching and learning, is certified to teach Advanced Placement Physics; his talents include a gifted endorsement for teaching gifted students; he has a masters of arts and science, meaning he's qualified to teach science across the board.

Dr. Williams, who begins his new duties on July 1, replaces retired Assistant Superintendent Ronnie Byers, who stepped down in November, after 34 years in the school system.

"We have not filled that position until now, obviously to save some money," Steppe said. "It came down to cases and a need to fill that position because of the workload. We had more than 100 applicants pursue that job."

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Mountain Home Show a weekend hit

By Janice Boling
Staff Writer
North Georgia News

The 15th Annual Mountain Home Show, a two-day event at North Georgia Technical College's Blairsville campus, welcomed guests Friday and Saturday to one of the best home shows in North Georgia.

The beautiful exhibits covered everything from planning and finance to solar power and decorating to solutions in the local economy.

Seminars included "How to Remodel and Get More for Less Cost" by Richard C. MacCrea. MacCrea, organizer of the Mountain Home Show, is the man to ask if you have questions about building a home in the North Georgia Mountains.

Other event highlights

included free give-a-ways, demonstrations, and lots of friendly faces. The best customer is a well informed customer. The event's education helps homeowners avoid costly mistakes and allows for the best home buying, and building experience.

Each year there is something new at the Mountain Home Show. Held annually at the Blairsville Campus of North Georgia Technical College, the show continues to thrive even in less than ideal economic conditions.

The trade show helps local construction businesses with ideas on how to survive the economy when business is slow. It also teaches consumers ways to battle rising en-



Patrons at the two-day Mountain Home Show learned about the benefits of solar energy for their homes. Photo/Janice Boling



Local members of the Sons and Daughters of Confederate Veterans pay homage at Blairsville War Memorial on Confederate Memorial Day. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Young Harris Art Fest a strong draw again

By Janice Boling
Staff Writer
North Georgia News

Young Harris - The weather was perfect, the crowds held steady, and the art was the best ever displayed at the Young Harris Art Fest 2012.

During the two-day festival, in its third year, more than 50 juried artists and craftsmen displayed their works of art and crafts. Every

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For \$1, patrons of the Young Harris Art Fest got the kiss of a lifetime from this adorable schnauzer named Roxanne. Proceeds from the kisses help fund the various causes that Operation Pup funds each year. Word out of Young Harris is that quite a bit of cash was raised by young Roxanne. It was a bigger attraction than the one-time \$1 a hug campaign to raise money that featured local celebrities and politicians. Roxanne's true gift is unconditional affection for one and all. Photo/Janice Boling

Nursing home honors volunteers

By Todd Forrest
Staff Writer
North Georgia News

Volunteers are the life blood of many organizations.

However, never have their importance been felt more than last week at the Union County Nursing Home.

Everyone has family or friends that have been, or are currently in a nursing home facility, so families are grateful to those who care for their loved ones when they're not

able to be there.

On April 23rd, the Union County Nursing Home held its Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, where it honored all of the volunteers that dedicate their time to lifting the spirits of the nursing home residents.

Yet, as one volunteer put it, "the residents are the ones who lift our spirits."

The annual event marked honors for churches, businesses and individuals who were commended for their tireless devotion to the friends and fam-

ily at the nursing home.

Director of Activities, Olivia Bragg, said the nursing home wouldn't exist if not for the dedication of its volunteers.

"We have volunteers that help with our church services, singing, they conduct activities such as bingo, auctions, help people get to and from the activity room and without the volunteers, we absolutely could not do it," she said. "Everybody comes to

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Relay for Life, May 18th-19th

Union County Relay For Life is scheduled at the Union County Farmers Market on Old Smokey Road. The event is scheduled 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. on May 18th and May 19th. For more organizational details, www.unioncountyrelay.org.



Great American Clean Up Event

Looking to get rid of those old tires laying around in the yard?

Get ready for the Great American Clean Up on Friday, May 4 from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and Saturday, May 5, from 8 a.m. to noon. Volun-

teers are still desperately needed to help with the event.

For more details about the Great American Clean Up and Scrap Tire event, turn to Page 9A and become enlightened. For more verbal details, call (706) 994-4837.