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over a portion of the money from the sale of the Arby's lot and transferring to the city the parking lot and greenspace parcels behind City Hall to settle the remaining debt.

After turning over these parcels, the DDA will use funds remaining from the Arby's sale to go toward construction of the proposed 175-space parking lot and public restrooms, plus the development of the greenspace, all for the betterment of the downtown area.

"The investment in our community is appreciated, and the funds from the sale will allow us to move forward with enhancing the parking in downtown," DDA Program Manager Darren Harper said.

DDA Board Chair Paul Thompson said the Arby's deal was a win for all parties involved, including the community.

"We feel like we've accomplished the goal that we set to get the funds back for the city – that's our job – and to bring progress to town, so I think we've done that," Thompson said. "I'm really looking forward to getting the parking lot and restrooms under construction and underway.

"And I'd really like to see that take place fairly quick, because I think that would add a whole lot to downtown, having something like that that people can use."

Union County Development Authority Executive Director Mitch

Griggs has been actively recruiting Arby's for years, with the current deal originating in a trip Griggs took to a trade show in fall 2018. There, he successfully recruited Arby's developer Mike Aldredge to the area.

"This is fantastic on a lot of fronts," Griggs said after the deal closed. "No. 1, it's a new business, and that's always a good thing – it's always good to bring in a national commercial enterprise."

Furthermore, Griggs said Arby's will add to the local tax base in the form of property

and sales taxes, etc., and that the restaurant will serve as a jobmaker for Union County residents.

Importantly, it will also function as a valuable recruiting tool to attract other national brands and even smaller businesses hunting locations to open stores, Griggs said, as Union County proves it can meet the demands of big companies like LongHorn, Home Depot and Chick-fil-A.

"We couldn't be happier that we finally got Arby's done," Griggs said.

Speaking of LongHorn,

another national brand recruited by Griggs that was seven years in the making, the famous steakhouse restaurant is actually running ahead of schedule construction wise and could open as early as March.

Regarding the stalled progress on Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen in Downtown Blairsville, the project is still in the works, though the restaurant's franchisee is facing staffing issues at two other locations he's opening, with delays there causing delays in Blairsville.

Coronavirus...from Page 1A

Six major airports are conducting the screenings, and many international airlines have announced disrupted services to and from China.

The first case of 2019-nCoV in the U.S. was diagnosed on Jan. 21 in Washington state, and a second case followed on Jan. 23 in Illinois.

As of press time, the CDC was reporting a total of seven cases in four states in the U.S., including California and Arizona, and 36 states with patients under investigation.

An eighth case was reported in Massachusetts by state health officials on Saturday, Feb. 1.

"The man recently traveled to Wuhan, China, and sought medical care soon after his return to Massachusetts," the Massachusetts Department of Public Health said. "He has been isolated since that time and will continue to remain isolated until cleared by public health officials.

"His few close contacts have been identified and are being monitored for any sign of symptoms."

By Sunday, Feb. 2, WHO was reporting 14,557 confirmed cases worldwide, with 14,411 of those cases being in China, and only 146 confirmed cases in a total of 23 other countries.

The 305 deaths attributed

to the virus by press time had all occurred in China but one; a Chinese patient in the Philippines, who had flown in from Wuhan, became the first victim to succumb to the virus outside of mainland China over the weekend.

CDC officials say more cases are likely to be identified in the coming days, including in the United States. It is also likely that person-to-person spread will continue to occur, even in the U.S.

However, the CDC also says that, "while person-to-person spread among close contacts has been detected with this virus, at this time this virus is not currently spreading in the community in the United States."

There are simple preventive actions people can take that are recommended by the Georgia Department of Public Health, the CDC and WHO.

People should wash their hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water isn't available. Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands, and avoid close contact with people who are sick.

To help prevent any further spread, people who are sick should stay at home; cough

or sneeze into the crook of their elbow or a tissue; immediately discard the tissue; and clean or disinfect frequently touched objects or surfaces.

District 2 Public Health Director Dr. Pamela Logan said the state is advising health care providers to be suspicious of this coronavirus and not assume patients presenting with flu-like symptoms just have the flu, especially those who have been traveling.

Also of current concern is the influenza virus, as flu activity is still very high this season.

According to the latest data, the CDC has reported 107,343 specimens that have tested positive for influenza in clinical laboratories since Sept. 29, 2019, though "the percentage of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza is 6.7%, below the epidemic threshold of 7.2%."

An early numbers comparison with influenza shows that the percentage of deaths attributed to the novel coronavirus is, so far, about 2%.

The Department of Public Health is advising residents who have not received a flu shot to get one via their doctor or a local pharmacy.

S.A.F.E....from Page 1A

still many in the mountains.

According to the nonprofit's most recent report, S.A.F.E. served 309 victims of abuse in 2018-2019, including 220 adults and 89 children; provided shelter for 93 victims; answered 469 crisis hotline calls; assisted 36 families with Christmas gifts; served 36 families through the Butterfly House Child Advocacy Center; and helped those in need of assistance pertaining to abuse.

Aiding the group in funding its efforts is the S.A.F.E. Thrift Store at 27 Pinebrook Drive in Blairsville, which last month hosted a "20/20 Sale" on Thursday, Jan. 9, to bring in customers and sell off some of the store's inventory.

The sale worked by offering a deal allowing shoppers to pick out 20 articles of clothing for just \$20.

Holding the 20/20 sale effectively increased the number of customers for the day, who bought clothing items in bulk and assisted the thrift store in controlling its inventory.

The thrift store's new Blairsville location has seen more foot traffic and also more donations since the relocation last year.

"When we first moved the store, it took a hit, because we had to get settled and get everything running the way we wanted it to," Cousin said. "But we saw a significant increase of people coming through the store, and I think that has a little to do with the economy, but also the location and media we have on it.

"What we get the most of are donations. We get tons of donations, and sometimes more than we can use."

S.A.F.E.'s mission statement reads: "To provide support, advocacy, and emergency shelter for victims of domestic abuse, child abuse and sexual abuse, regardless of gender, and to heighten community awareness of such abuse in Towns and Union counties."

The S.A.F.E. organization is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and is funded by state, federal and private grants, according to SAFEservices.org.

"We operate two local Thrift Stores which support our Victim Services Programs," the website continues. "S.A.F.E. relies on community support and volunteers for the success of our programs."

The S.A.F.E. Thrift Store in Towns County is located at 4134 Bonny Hills Drive in Young Harris, and both locations are open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Union County Lions Club Trash To Treasure February 22nd

The Union County Lions Club Trash To Treasure event will be held on Saturday, February 22, 2020 at the Union County Civic Center, 165 Welborn Street, Blairsville, GA from 8 AM-2 PM.

It's time for our next fundraiser. We raise funds to help those in our local community. We have people who sell yard sale items, candles, jewelry, crafts, tools, etc. The



cost for a 4x6 space is \$15 each. Setup will be Friday, February 21st from 4 PM-6 PM. You can also set up Saturday from 7 AM-8 AM.

If you would like to

be a vendor at our next event or have additional questions, please contact Chasity Miller at 706-897-5467 or chasrcs@gmail.com. We hope to see you there. NI Feb 5 2020