

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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I.T. Harkins' new home springs from the ashes

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

As I.T. Harkins sat at his dinner table one Sunday evening in October 2016, he heard a peculiar sound coming from the kitchen.

"I had just finished my meal, and I hear the refrigerator - POP-POP-POP-POP - banging loud as a shotgun," said Harkins.

The 97-year-old Suches resident jumped up and rushed to his fridge, only to find nothing the matter with it. Where was the sound coming from?

Harkins turned his attention to the adjoining garage, and when he opened

the door, he was hit with a wall of heat.

He realized then that his home of more than three decades was burning.

"I got rid of that door right quick and ran out the front door, and the same thing happened," said Harkins.

The fire had spread into the attic of his home, and flames rolled out of the vents in his roof and into the night air overhead as he escaped to safety.

Harkins couldn't call for help because his phone was inside the burning home, so he took up his garden hose to wet the grass around the house in an effort to contain the blaze.

"I can't express how I

felt," said Harkins, looking back on the night of the fire. "A lot of stuff we'd had for years, and it was slow-motion burning. I'd never had a feeling like that in my life, but yet I had to face it."

As Harkins fought the fire, passersby leaving the evening service of the nearby Corinth Baptist Church came to his aid and called 911.

By the time firefighters extinguished the blaze, Harkins' home had suffered enough damage that it needed to be rebuilt from the ground up, and many of his belongings had either burned or sustained significant damage from water and smoke.

In true Suches fashion, See *Harkins*, Page 2A



Photo by Shawn Jarrard

I.T. Harkins standing outside his newly constructed home with his youngest son Robert.

Union County School board qualifying ends March 9 at noon

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

Qualifying for the Union County Board of Education continues through Friday.

The board posts up for election are Districts 2, 4 and 5, and the qualifying fees have been set at \$108.

Qualifying will begin on Monday, March 5, and will run

from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Thursday, and from 9 a.m. to noon on Friday, March 9.

Interested residents will need to turn in their qualifying paperwork to the Union County Election Superintendent, who will be located inside the Registrar's Office in the Union County Courthouse.

"The Republican Party and the Democratic Party

have left it up to me to qualify the candidates," said Election Superintendent Libby Stevens.

The General Primary Election will be held on May 22, and the General Election will be held on November 6.

For more information and for qualifying paperwork, residents can visit the Secretary of State's website at sos.ga.gov.

12U Lady Panthers win state basketball championship



Members of the 11-12 Lady Panthers are: Lillie Carpenter #00, Georgia Patton #3, Ariel McCarter #11, Reese Kelley #21, Morgan Warren #22, Lara Turner #24, Layla Akins #30, Hope Patton #32, Kamryn Mull #33 and Ila Bragg #44. See

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Lady Panthers are coached by Kayla Phillips,

Heather Akins and Rickey Tanner.

Union County pulled away from a 19-16 halftime advantage to defeat Pierce County 44-30 in

the championship game. Earlier in the day they routed Fitzgerald 49-19, after demolishing Long County 50-14 on Friday night.

See Story Page 2B

Community Emergency Response Team has new graduates



Photo by Mark Novak

The newest members of Union County's Community Emergency Response Team.

By Mark Novak
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Union County volunteers just finished their C.E.R.T. training and are ready to aid the community in the event of a natural disaster.

"We're really proud of our team, they worked really hard," said Union County Fire Chief David Dyer. "They're

volunteers, and we really appreciate the time they put in to help our community.

C.E.R.T. stands for Community Emergency Response Team and is a program that was developed and implemented by the Los Angeles City Fire Department in 1985, where they recognized that most citizens would be on their own in the event of a

catastrophe.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, found the program to be so beneficial that the federal agency made it available to communities nationwide.

That's how FEMA came to assist counties with grants to help cover some of the cost to run the C.E.R.T. training

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Cummings won't seek EMC re-election, to seek state seat

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

Mickey Cummings has decided to qualify as a Republican candidate for state representative in the Georgia House District 8 race.

As such, he will not seek re-election to the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors in September.

Cummings is in the third and final year of his first term on the EMC board, and he has served as board president for the last year and a half.

"Regarding the EMC position, I just want people

to know that I will not be running for that again," said Cummings. "You can't do both jobs at one time. I don't think there's a way.

"I want people to know that seat is going to be empty, so we need some good quality candidates to step up to the plate."

The EMC director seats held by Roy Perren of Towns County and Larry Williams of Fannin County will also be up for election this year.

EMC elections take place in the summer and results are announced in the annual

See *Cummings*, Page 2A



Mickey Cummings

North Georgia News announces New Cash Countdown Contest - Chance to Win Cash Every Month!

Blairsville- Cash Countdown is a new contest brought to you by *North Georgia News* and *Towns County Herald* that offers readers a chance to win cash every month.

No purchase is necessary, and qualifying is easy - simply text the keyword "Georgia" to 71441 to enter. Powered by Direct Connect Mobile Marketing, entrants will receive text offers from *North Georgia News* and *Towns County Herald* sponsors, but never more than two per week.

A monthly prize of \$100 will be drawn on the last Monday of every month. The monthly prizewinner is not eligible to repeat as a monthly winner.

The following are frequently asked questions concerning the program.

1. What kind of offers will I be receiving?

We partner with local merchants to send you coupons via text message. It's the newest thing, and people love it. We have merchants who have been using this software successfully for more than two years.

2. How do you decide who wins the monthly cash drawing?

Our system will randomly select a winner at the end of each month. As long as you are a current subscriber to Cash Countdown, your number will be in the drawing. No purchase is necessary.

3. TEXT -Who will have my mobile number?

No one! Our software provider, Direct Connect keeps all numbers behind a firewall in a secure database. Your number is not shared with any-

one. Local merchants send us their deals, and we handle the texting. They never see your number.

4. Am I going to start getting spammed?

Absolutely not! Our software provider is FCC compliant, and by federal law, your number cannot be shared.

5. WINNER- If I decide I don't want to participate any more?

"Unsubscribe" never seems to work with email! Unlike email, our short code 71441 is registered with the FCC. By law, we must provide an automated means to unsubscribe to any database. We will never text you more than twice per week, but should you wish to unsubscribe, simply reply with a single word: STOP. You will immediately receive a text confirmation of your removal.

UCHS Mock Trial Team takes Second Place at state



The Union County High School Mock Trial Team finished its stellar season with a Runner-Up victory at state competition. Read more in this week's Sports Section page 3B.

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Weather
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Fri: Sunny Hi 54 Lo 38
Sat: PM Rain Hi 57 Lo 45

PANTHERS SOCCER

Mar 6 @ Fannin 5 & 7 PM
Mar 9 @ Darlington 5:30 & 7:30 PM

BASEBALL

Mar 8 vs. West Hall played at Coolray Field - Lawrenceville GA

Woody Gap Student Council Yard Sale

March 9th and March 10th

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GED Prep Classes

Shirley Miller Building

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UCHS BAND FUNDRAISER

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