

Opinions

Everybody has one...

911 Upgrades

911... it is the number that we call when we have any emergency. We take it for granted that we have such simple and quick access to emergency services. It hasn't always been that way. There was a time when we didn't have E911 in Union County. We had to take our own calls; dispatch other responders and volunteers; and then respond. It was an imperfect system and extremely stressful. The implementation of E911 in Union County was a major step in improving emergency services.

Over the years, there have been improvements and upgrades. The greatest improvements were the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and renumbering of the addresses. Our current E911 system has the capability to answer a 911 call; map the location of the caller; record vital information; dispatch responders via radios; and communicate with responders during the entire incident. Even with our present capabilities, there is a need for upgrades.

The Union County E911 Communications Center is in the process of upgrading the telephone interface and radio interface systems; two vitally important components of the E911 system. The current telephone and radio hardware and software have not been upgraded in 16 years.

The telephone interface system enables a dispatcher to answer emergency and non-emergency calls. 911 calls are routed through a computer interface system that provides location of the caller and other vital information. The new system allows the information to be processed faster, more accurately, and with fewer mistakes. The new system has the capability to transfer 911 calls to other emergency 911 dispatch centers without losing the mapping and vital information. The system will also have the capability to receive data and texting to 911.

The radio interface system enables a dispatcher to set off alert tones to responders and communicate with various emergency services through the radio. These include ambulance; fire department; and local, state, and federal law enforcement. The new system has the capability to use the current analog format and new digital formats.

The new systems will be state of the art and have the ability to scale for the future. There will be 24-hour monitoring of the

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief David Dyer



Starstruck Mystery

Our town has the advantage over the big cities. We can see the stars. The ones in the sky, not on the red carpet. The human fascination with the night sky says something about us.

Scientists say the observable universe is 93 billion light years in diameter. In that space are billions of galaxies, each with billions of stars. Yet when you tilt your head heavenward at night, you might see 5000 stars from horizon to horizon. What you see hints at the unseen. It captures the imagination, and makes you feel small. Alister McGrath ("Glimpsing the Face of God") writes, "Maybe the stars point to something mysterious, something unfathomable, which somehow lies beyond them. Something seems to lie beyond the whispering orbs of the night. But what? And how is it to be known?"

Since the times of Adam, Abraham, and Moses, God has been revealing himself through creation while promising a personal appearance. Yet what human could fathom how the transcendent One, vaster than the visible stars in the sky and the invisible galaxies beyond, could actually care about this speck of dust and the people who live on it? The ancient text says, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them. Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite" (Psa. 147:3-5).

Someone steps into history. Could he be the Son of Man who was with the Ancient Days in Daniel 7? Was this the child born to be called Wonderful Counselor, Almighty God in Isaiah 9? Would he initiate the new covenant in Jeremiah 31? Would he bring good news to the afflicted, bind up the brokenhearted, and free the prisoners per Isaiah 61? One day in Jerusalem a gathering crowd thought so. "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest," they cried out. The skeptical religious leaders demanded an end to it. Jesus said, "If these become silent, the stones will cry out!" It was a pregnant moment. Something was happening far beyond what was visible to the eye, a man riding on a colt over coats and palm branches laid before him. They were worshipping him and he did not object (Luke 19, Matt. 21).

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All Things New Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. Why should we recycle?

A. As well as all the information we listed last week about the benefits of recycling, you also help create jobs. A study in 2016 found that recycling and reuse activities in the United States accounted for 757,000 jobs. We can all make a difference by practicing proper recycling. You can also look for items made from recycled materials when you make a purchase. Buying products made of recycled materials creates a market for them.

Q. Can we recycle paper?

A. Yes, collect paper and newspapers in a paper grocery bag or in tied bundles, or you can bring it in loose. We take newsprint, office paper, magazines and even soft bound books. There is less paper than ever due to more people getting most of their news online but, newsprint is still needed in the recycling industry. Recycling paper saves trees. Did you know that it takes up to 75,000 trees to produce one Sunday Edition of the New York Times? The paper recycled in Union County is taken straight to the mill to be made into newsprint.

Q. How do we make sure we are separating our plastics correctly?

A. #1 Plastics are usually clear or green and glossy and includes, clear and green soda bottles, cooking oil bottles, peanut butter jars, salad dressing bottles, and water bottles. #2 plastics are usually a milky or solid color and are rigid and includes milk jugs, detergent bottles, and shampoo bottles. Most of these containers are also marked on the bottom with a "1" or "2" in order to help you identify the two different types of plastic. Now, there are also plastics that can be labeled as #4 through #7, and we CANNOT take those at all.

Q. Does this mean we can recycle our salad containers, fruit containers and butter tubs?

A. We still CANNOT take these items even though they are marked as #1 and #2. We can only take items with a screw top lid, and you need to remove the lid. Items like salad and fruit containers have a different molecular structure even though they are labeled as #1 and #2. They are molded differently than an item with a screw top lid, so this causes them to melt at a different rate even though they have the same recycling number.

Q & A from Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Signs and Symptoms of Overdose

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, an average of 130 people die every day from opioid overdose. Opioids include prescription medications used to treat pain such as morphine, codeine, methadone, oxycodone, hydrocodone, fentanyl, hydromorphone, and buprenorphine, as well as illegal drugs such as heroin and illicit potent opioids such as fentanyl.

The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

These drugs carry a high risk of abuse and dependence, meaning that people often take more than prescribed in order to get the same effect they experienced when they first used the drug. Since prescription medications are controlled and can be expensive to buy on the street, using heroin is often the next step for those who have become physically addicted to prescription opiates.

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Letters to the Editor

Thank You, Dr. Gowder

Dear Editor,

For the last few weeks when I open my newspaper, I see a picture of Dr. David Gowder and an article about his involvement with illegal activities involving prescription drugs.

Today, something - perhaps the spirit of my deceased wife - inspired me to write this letter. I do not know Dr. Gowder outside of the emergency room of the Blairsville Hospital.

I have written letters to this paper about my darling wife of 52 years, whom I named The Iron Lady and who died last June from cancer. She fought that dreaded disease for four-and-a-half years, and she fought like a champion, thus the name "Iron Lady."

But like in any prize fight, there are winners and losers. In her fight with death, some-

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Help us, Lord

Dear Editor,

"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them, you did it to me.'" Matthew 25:40

This scripture is always a challenge to our daily walk as Christians. As we try to live in the real world, we must remember that at all times we need to try to treat others as if we were dealing with Jesus Himself. Get back incorrect charge? How would we handle it if Jesus undercharged us... Someone take our chosen parking spot? How would we handle it if Jesus had been

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How would you respond?

Dear Editor,

I sat in a roundtable discussion of adults and young adults and these are some of the questions that were discussed:

Do you go to church to worship? Would you go to church if your friends did not go? Why do you go to church? Do you read your Bible, and if so, how many times a day? What is salvation? Where is your Bible at home? Why do you go to the altar? Why do you pray? Why isn't prayer in schools? Do you know what the Ten Commandments are? Do you thank God for your food at each meal?

These questions were discussed at a Sunday School class and the answers were very disappointing.

How would you respond to these questions if someone were to ask you?

Prayerfully,
Lorraine Harris

Firewise Citizen's Coalition

On April 16th at 1 p.m., the members of the Towns County Firewise USA Citizen's Coalition will hold their monthly meeting at the Towns County Civic Center next to the Courthouse, where refreshments will be served. All interested citizens are invited to attend, and especially the leaders of Towns County's 21 Firewise USA communities. Georgia has 108 recognized Firewise USA communities and Towns County has 21 of them! The meeting will be an update on Firewise, wildfires, Ready-Set-Go, and other wildfire risk reduction programs available to citizens.

The keynote speaker is Mike Zupko, Executive Director of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, a group that coordinates wildland fire policy nationally. Mike lives in Monroe, GA so he is one of us. The nationally acclaimed Towns County Firewise program started in 2008 during an 800-acre fire on Cedar Knob Mountain in Young Harris. When Billy Snipes told a group at the Fire Adapted Annual meeting in Colorado Springs that our biggest fire was 800 acres the comment was made that it would be a "camp fire" out there, but to us it was a big deal that we want to try to prevent here in the future. A one-acre fire can be a major disaster if your house is sitting in the middle of that acre! After that "camp" fire, local, state and federal agencies began working with community members to get them involved at a grassroots level. They did this by telling the people who live in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI - or living next to or in the forest) the story about the risks of wildfire in the neighborhoods where they live.

The fire agency representatives who started Firewise, Ready-Set-Go & Fire Adapted Communities in Towns County soon realized that they were the only ones pushing the issue and if they quit pushing, the momentum would roll to a stop, no one would notice, and people would go back to business as usual assuming that the wildfire was something that won't happen in their community and they would worry about it when they saw smoke.

These fire agency representatives recognize the risk is very real and could happen anytime, so in 2013, they passed ownership of these programs to the newly formed Towns County Firewise Citizen's Coalition, made up of local citizens and fire agency representatives who are the very people most at risk from a wildfire.

The coalition has taken ownership of the Firewise, Ready-Set-Go, and Fire Adapted Communities programs in Towns County and devel-

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RC&D Executive Director Frank Riley



The Bald Mountains

When first given the saw I thought it was probably used to cut firewood. However, I soon learned this saw had history behind it. My grandfather and grandmother purchased the first 80 acres of their farm sometime around 1937. Papa cut each tree on his land with this cross cut saw. I asked him about removing the stumps.

Papa told me that he burned the cleared area and then plowed around each stump. He said, "After 7-8 years the stumps rotted and you had yourself a cleared field." Try to imagine the amount of work it took to saw those trees and plow around those stumps. It would have taken much longer without the use of fire.

Fire has been used by man for years as a tool. I have read the Cherokee used fire to maintain clearings for agricultural purposes. It is also speculated that the balds on top of our highest mountains were created with the use of fire. An interesting story about how these Bald mountaintops originated was told by the Cherokee.

Many years ago the people of the Blue Ridge lived in great fear of a large winged predator. The bird lived on some high craggy mountain peaks and patrolled our skies much like Bald Eagles or Red-Tailed Hawks. This bird was so large that it could swoop out of the sky and capture a small adult with its sharp talons. Afterwards the bird would lift off the ground and fly back to its nest where the human prey was delivered to the giant bird's offspring.

In an effort to defend themselves against the attacks of this large bird the Cherokee cleared the highest mountains of trees and shrubs. They also posted sentries on these mountaintops. When the large bird was spotted the sentry would build a fire and place green limbs on the fire which resulted in heavy smoke. This smoke would let the villages know of the impending trouble. Sounds like a good plan to me. However, even a strong chain can be broken at its weakest link.

A village of the Cherokee close to Hayesville appointed a sentry to stand guard on what is now today as Standing Indian Mountain. This fellow tended to be on the lazy side and was not too worried about the giant bird. And after a few months of sentry duty on the mountain he began to relax. During one of his naps the big bird appeared. It swooped down from the skies and grabbed a young maiden. The great bird flew toward the bald mountain with the maiden dead in its talons.

Meanwhile the sentry still slept. The bird landed in a tall tree above a large cliff near where the sentry slept. The sentry still slept and this

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Around The Farm Mickey Cummings



Pesticide Resistance

Pesticides are an integral part of agriculture. They play an important role in making sure that we have enough food. Resistance to those pesticides is becoming a growing issue too. Let's talk about what pesticide resistance is, how it occurs and what can be done to slow down resistance.

Pests are pretty smart and capable of adapting so that they continue to survive. Many different types of pests from diseases to insects to weeds are capable of becoming resistant to pesticides that are used to control them. When a pest is resistant that means the pesticide, whether it's an herbicide, fungicide, or insecticide is no longer effective at controlling that pest population. Spraying a resistant pest is like spraying it with water. If a single pesticide is used repeatedly then you are creating a scenario where pesticide resistance is very likely to occur.

Let's use aphids as an example for how resistance can occur. Aphids are a very common insect that is very small. They are capable of reproducing very quickly, which means they can become resistant to pesticides very easily. If you have an aphid problem and you decide to spray, that spray probably won't be 100% effective at controlling the population. It's somewhat similar to people in that not all medication is going to be equally effective for everybody. Those aphids that survived the application will continue to reproduce, passing the genes that gave them resistance down to their children. Before too long you may have an entire population that is resistant to that particular pesticide. Pests that reproduce quickly are more adept at developing pesticide resistance.

There are a few ways that pests can become resistant. The first is metabolic resistance. Some pests develop the ability to break down the pesticide once it's been applied and they have taken it in. Again, this is similar to people who have a very fast metabolism so they never gain weight. These pests are able to take the pesticide and break it down so that it's deemed ineffective before it can take effect. Another way that it can happen is that the target site of the pesticide in the pest is altered so that the pesticide is not able to take effect. Some insects develop thicker shells so that an insecticide can't be absorbed. Simply altering behavior because pests are smart enough to avoid the pesticide can take place too. That is similar to when deer hunters remark that all the deer disappear when deer season opens.

Pesticide resistance can lead to a lot of problems for producers. That's why it's important to remember to rotate modes of action. All labelled

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Watching and Working Jacob Williams



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