

GBI...from Page 1A

County Sheriff's Lt. Daren Osborn.

The taped box was somewhat heavy and contained no marks, and the security guard couldn't find anyone who knew anything about it, said Lt. Osborn.

Unfortunately, security footage was not available during the time that the box was delivered, so UGH Security had no way to call back to the box's origin on campus, said Lt. Osborn.

That's when the hospital called 911 for assistance, and when sheriff's office investigators arrived on scene that morning, they quickly set up a perimeter and evacuated the front area of the hospital, as well as the area above the main lobby on the second floor, said Lt. Osborn.

Representatives with the Union County Fire Department also responded to the scene with a fire engine, and sheriff's office investigators determined their best course of action was to call the GBI to bring in specialized equipment to analyze the suspicious package, said Lt. Osborn.

The whole episode began before 11 a.m., and the GBI agents arrived from out of town shortly after noon that Friday.

It didn't take them long to find out what was in the box, though a member of the hospital auxiliary who had been absent that day phoned in right after the agents entered the building to announce that it was magazines, per the sheriff's office.

Following the ordeal, the sheriff's office quickly gave the all clear, and the business of the hospital returned to normal.



Photo by Shawn Jarrard
A view from outside Union General Hospital's main entrance during lunchtime on Friday, May 4.

"We've never had anything like this," said Hospital CEO Lewis Kelley afterward. "Everyone did their job."

Parking...from Page 1A



Photo by Shawn Jarrard
Mike Collins of Michael's restaurant talking downtown parking in the May 1 city council meeting.

four parcels of land that the city's going to own. The first parcel of land that's sold, the profits from that land, we're going to pave the parking lot, we're going to stripe it.

"We're going to get good parking, and we're going to have restrooms down by the dumpster for all the events ... on the square." And here we are, standing in the beginning of the second quarter 2018, and I'm still living with a dust bowl that continues to get worse as it rains and erodes."

Added Collins: "One of the big problems I have now, too, a lot of my clientele is elderly, and when they try to park in the back, there's no handicap access."

As Collins pointed out, one of the main reasons the city hasn't moved forward with paved parking on the Haralson property development is that it has been waiting on the sale of land parcels to fund the project.

A number of businessowners attended the

council meeting to voice their support for better downtown parking, including Mike Cook of Cook's Restaurant; Millie Arrowood, who owns the building plaza next to Cook's; Regina Garrett of Cut Loose Hair Salon; Colleen and Chris Urbaniuk of Seasons Inn & Plaza; and Bill McGlamery of the Wine Shoppe.

In response to these businessowners, and with the mindset that paved parking will make the Haralson property more desirable to potential developers, the city council asked Blairsville Downtown Development Authority Program Manager Darren Harper to get the DDA board started on formalized parking plans for the area behind city hall.

Mayor Jim Conley said that, in the meantime, downtown business employees can use the old ramp off Georgia 515 and some of the drier grassy areas to park.

How the city will pay for the improved parking area - including engineering plans, grading, construction costs and more - will be determined at a later date.

The Blairsville DDA Board discussed parking in its regular meeting at noon on Tuesday, May 8, which occurred after press time.

Also in the May 1 city council meeting, Chip McGaughey of EMI, the city's engineering firm, provided an update for the cost estimate of a proposed grit removal system at the city sewer plant.

The total cost of the project will be \$800,000, which will be secured through a loan from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority, or GEFA.

GEFA has granted preliminary approval for funding to include \$200,000 in debt forgiveness, and the council voted unanimously to authorize EMI to proceed with the project.

The grit removal system will eliminate costly recurring maintenance at the wastewater treatment facility due to grit - last year alone, the city paid nearly \$50,000 to repair pumps damaged by grit.

Next steps for the project include submitting another application to GEFA for final approval, which is expected to come in August.

EMI will be working between now and December to design the system, and the city will have from December to February 2019 to bid out the construction and award a contract.

Actual construction on the project will need to have started by June 2019 in order to meet GEFA's deadline for first loan draw to pay the contractors.

In other business, the council ratified the hiring of Aaron Mannheim to serve as

airport operator at the Blairsville Municipal Airport.

The council initially hired Ed Marshall for the position in February, though Marshall has since moved into a part-time position.

Mannheim will take the place of Storman Glass, who will be resigning this month as airport operator. The long-term plan is for Mannheim to take over as airport manager when John Hamler retires several years from now.

UNION COUNTY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Garden Tours	Every Monday: GMREC (May-Oct)	9 am - 1 pm
Children's Story Time	Union County Library	11 am
Kiwanis Club	Steve's Steakhouse	Noon
Civil Air Patrol	Blairsville Airport	6 pm
Boy Scouts #101	United Methodist Ch	7 pm
	Every Tuesday:	
Tri State Bus. Women	Cabin Coffee	8 am
Get Fit	First UMC	5:15 pm
Smoky Mtn. Melodies	United Methodist Ch	6:30 pm
Hi Country Harmonizers	Branan Lodge	6:30 pm
	Every Wednesday:	
BINGO	Civic Center	7 pm
	Every Thursday:	
Butternut Ladies Golf	Golf Course (Apr-Oct)	8:30 am
Masonic Luncheon	Cooks Restaurant	11:30 am
Rotary Club	NGTC	Noon
Get Fit	First UMC	5:15 pm
	Third Monday of each month:	
Shape Note Music	Old Courthouse	6:30 pm
High Country Artisan	U.C.Bank Com Room	6:30 pm
Allegheny Lodge #114	Masonic Lodge	6:30 pm
Exp Aviation Assoc #1211	Blairsville Airport	7 pm
	Third Tuesday of each month:	
UC Homemakers	Dooley Chapter	Noon
Healthy Hearts Support	UGH 2nd Floor Class	2 pm
Am. Legion Post 121	Veteran's Center	6:30 pm
American Legion, Aux	Veteran's Center	6:30 pm
Chatuge Gun Club	Senior Center, Hia.	7 pm
Compassionate Friends	UCB Community Room	7 pm
	Third Wednesday of each month:	
Quilts of Valor	Coosa Methodist Ch	9:30 am
GA Mtn. Writers Club	Grinds & Glazes (G&G)	10 am
Blairsville Garden Club	Location not listed	1 pm
Friends of the Library	Library Com Room	2 pm
Beta Sigma Phi, Iota Iota	So. Bank & Trust	7 pm
	Third Thursday of each month:	
MMQG	Mtn. Presbyterian Ch	10 am-3 pm
Kinship Care	Civic Center	Noon
Commissioner's Meet.	County Courthouse	6 pm
Good N'bers Auto	Rib Country, Murphy	6:30 pm
UT Home Builders	Moschetto's	6:30 pm
Cub Scouts Trp. #101	United Methodist Ch.	6:30 pm
Beta Sigma Phi	Civic Center	7 pm
Tip-off Club	UC High School	7 pm
UC Saddle Club	Arena Clubhouse	7 pm
Jaycees	Fort Sorghum	7:30 pm
	Third Friday of each month:	
No activities listed		
	Third Saturday of each month:	
UC Republican Party	Civic Center	10 am
Goldwing Road Riders	Daniels Steak House	11 am