

Schools...from Page 1A

“We’re listening to a concerted effort to not only teach these kids academics but teach them work-ready skills.”



Now that school is back in, residents should keep an eye out for children loading and offloading buses – watch for flashing lights and stopped buses. Photo by Mark Smith

Be a Junior Ranger at Brasstown Bald



Young visitors have the opportunity to learn about the environment and protect Brasstown Bald!

Interested kids can participate in bat and bug activities and complete the Junior Ranger booklet with an Interpretive Guide to earn a Junior Ranger badge. Junior Rangers are typically between the ages of 8-13, although all ages can participate. Parents and grandparents are encouraged to join!

Junior Ranger Saturdays will meet and take place at the mountain top Visitor Center. For those who can't make this guided experience, the Junior Ranger program is offered on

a do-it-yourself basis every day the Visitor Center is open. Guided program is offered on these Saturday's in August: 17th, 24th, 31st.

Choose a session: 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. or 1:30 - 3 p.m. Fee for booklet and badge is \$4 cash per child. No pre-registration required.

Join in the national junior ranger movement and earn badges from parks all over the US. Kids in 4th grade? Did you know... all 4th grade students in the USA can receive a free Federal Lands pass, allowing them and their family access to hundreds of parks for one year! It's easy! www.every-kidnapark.gov/. NT(Aug14.A1)SH

Hill said they faced some of their usual traffic challenges with car riders for the first week of school, but that the new paving around the primary and elementary schools was a great improvement and well-received by parents.

Over at the high school, Principal C.T. Hussion greeted students at the front office drop-off entrance to personally say good morning to freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors as they entered the building.

And greeting students is not just for the first day, Hussion said – it's every school day of the year, weather notwithstanding.

Hussion said Hill initiated the practice when he was principal of the high school as a way to teach students to acknowledge others and learn teamwork.

Following the morning rush, after students made it

to their homerooms, they were all treated to a 'welcome back' presentation at the Fine Arts Center, where Hussion introduced them to the high school leadership team for the new school year.

There were actually two presentations, one for juniors and seniors, followed by a second one for freshmen and sophomores, because the messages were slightly different. But central to both presentations was Hussion's no-nonsense discourse on the rules of conduct.

There's no wiggle room with these rules, said Hussion to the students, because they're state of Georgia rules, and if

someone breaks the rules and is caught, "we have no choice but to do what the state tells us we must do. Period."

But Hussion didn't linger on the negative.

"The way the year goes depends on you," Hussion said to the upperclassmen. "You are the leaders of the school. In all of your different areas, it depends on you."

"Everybody's going to be looking to you for leadership in all of your areas ... you are it. It's your time. It's your turn."

Continued Hussion, referring to a slide presentation, "This is on (end of course) testing – we were No. 1 out of all those high schools (last

year). You need to be proud of this. You did it. It's just part of the culture. It's no mistake that we do it every year."

Hussion said college and career readiness wasn't about test scores, however.

"It's about who's ready," Hussion said, pointing out also that the high school was No. 1 in graduation rate as well for last year.

Hussion said there were 54 new high school students entering the school this year from places as far away as California and Massachusetts, as well as from several counties in Georgia. There's a reason parents are flocking to this school district, he said.



The faculty and staff of Union County High posed for a group photo just prior to the start of school last week. Photo by Jarrett Whitener



School administrators greeting car riders as they enter the building for the first day back at Union County High on Aug. 7. Photo by Mark Smith