

Tax Sale...from Page 1A

the auction begins.

"This is the worst part of the job, selling properties for delinquent taxes," said Knight. "The goal is to collect the taxes, the goal is not to sell anybody's property."

Tax sales help the tax commissioner to maintain a high collection rate, which is important, because county government and the school system, both of which levy countywide property taxes, set their annual budgets based on expected tax collections.

As for Knight, he has managed to collect greater than 99 percent of all property taxes levied for 2016 and back, and 2017 collections are above 96 percent and counting.

Knight has been tax commissioner since 2013, and in that time, he's worked hard to make sure everybody is paying their fair share of property taxes.

"We had a lot on the books when I came in here, and they're really cleaned up well," said Knight. "But this is the process that started the job, and it helps to keep folks knowing that they need to pay their taxes."

Added Knight: "The thing about property taxes, if people are struggling or having a hard time, we'd like for them

to come in here, and we would like to work with them first. I set up payment plans.

"We don't set up a long-term payment plan. If they come in January, I want (back taxes) paid before November or before that next tax bill is due. I'm doing them a disservice

if I don't get them caught up, because they're going to stay behind, and then the interest and penalties accrue."

Finally, Knight advises people to fully investigate the process before committing their time and money toward acquiring property in a tax

sale.

"There still could be liens with the IRS, liens with Medicaid, and those do not go away," said Knight. "When you buy a property at a tax sale, you need to do your homework, and it's buyer beware."

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sheriff's office.

The ensuing standoff began shortly after the Cherokee County E-911 Center received an emergency call from a neighbor at about 8:20 p.m. that Monday, according to the sheriff's office.

Deputies responded quickly to the scene, where they heard gunshots and breaking glass, according to the sheriff's office.

During this time, the Cherokee County Emergency Management Administration placed a reverse 911 call to residents in the immediate area, notifying them to stay in place, according to the sheriff's office.

Numerous agencies responded to the scene, according to the sheriff's office, including the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, the Cherokee Tribal Police Department SWAT, Jackson

County SWAT, Cherokee County Emergency Medical Services, and the Ranger Volunteer Fire Department.

Agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigation also offered their assistance, according to the sheriff's office.

When Tribal SWAT approached in an armored BearCat, Mashburn reportedly fired several shots at the vehicle during its approach, according to the sheriff's office.

As the incident progressed into the early morning hours, authorities made several attempts to contact Mashburn inside the home to no avail, according to the sheriff's office.

At the end of the seven-hour standoff, Mashburn was discovered dead inside the residence from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound, according to the sheriff's

office.

Cherokee County Sheriff Derrick Palmer commented that the unfortunate event is one that has affected the families on both sides of this tragedy, and even the Hiwassee Dam Community as a whole.

"There's a lot of unanswered questions there, a lot of things there that I'm sure they're needing answers to in trying to figure out what happened," said Sheriff Palmer. "And even the neighbors that were up the street who were a part of this, they're going through traumatic things."

"So, our heartfelt prayers go out to all the people involved in this, and we hope to get as many answers as we can for these people, these families that were involved. Unfortunately, when things like this happen, there's going to be some questions that we will probably never get answered."

Pets...from Page 1A

in cases of rabies exposure to pets and several definitions within the ordinance.

"It's an amendment to an existing rule," said Jarrett. "Any time we amend or make new rules, we have to take it to public comment to solicit the public's input, and then we'll present that to the Board of Health at their regular meeting in October."

Previously, if someone had an unvaccinated pet or other animal that came into contact with a rabid animal via either a bite or non-bite exposure through open wounds, the victim animal would have to be put in quarantine for six months.

With this new rule modification, the quarantine period is reduced to four months.

"It's a shorter period based on science," said Terry. "And the National Association of Public Health Veterinarians has recommended a shorter period for that particular (malady)."

Also, if the victim animal either didn't have vaccination documentation or was not current, it would be treated as an unvaccinated animal.

However, the new guidance says that if the victim animal has ever had a rabies vaccination in its lifetime, all that would need doing in case of exposure would be to administer a booster shot and quarantine it for 45 days.

"It's a little different guide based on the science information and epidemiology that they looked at," said Terry, adding that he felt vaccines have been improved in recent years as well.

The majority of the rules across all of the 13 counties that comprise Georgia District 2 Public Health were written at about the same time, and they are being reviewed and corrections are being made as needed.

The rule being changed was written in 2009 and included in the previous manual from 2012, though the newest guideline is dated 2018.

Furthermore, the new ordinance no longer mentions

specific quarantine periods, rather, it references the state rabies manual compendium, so if the state tweaks these numbers again, no new rules will have to be adopted.

The next public hearing for the updated Union County ordinance will take place on Tuesday, Aug. 28.

Located at 45 Hughes Street, Suite B, in Blairsville, the Health Department offers

many services in the following areas:

Child and adolescent health; immunizations; dental care up to age 19; family planning; prenatal case management; cancer screenings; breast and cervical cancer screenings; Women, Infants and Children (WIC); communicable diseases (HIV testing, STD testing, TB screening); and environmental health.

Nearly Normal String Band in concert at Old Courthouse



The Nearly Normal String Band, Viva and Neal Araki

The Nearly Normal String Band, Viva and Neal Araki, will be appearing Friday night, August 31, in the Old Courthouse on the Square presented by the Union County Historical Society. They just keep adding great songs to their repertoire.

Viva grew up in Florida and moved to the Atlanta area several years ago where she met Neil. She is regarded as one of the best banjo players in the old mountain "clawhammer" style of playing, and she is also an accomplished guitar player. Her bell-clear voice is equally at home singing an old mountain ballad or belting out a blues number.

Neal was born and grew up in New York City. He became interested in playing gui-

tar while he was a student at Yale University. After graduation, he spent a year touring the country in a Volkswagen camper, polishing his guitar skills, and choosing a place to settle. Fortunately, he chose Atlanta and north Georgia.

Neal at first learned to play fiddle tunes on the guitar in the manner of his hero, Doc Watson, then he liked them so well that he started playing the fiddle itself. He also plays banjo and mandolin.

The concerts in the Old Courthouse on the Square begin at 7 p.m. There is no required admission charge; the musicians donate their time and talents. Voluntary contributions to the restoration fund are always welcomed and appreciated.

TVA...from Page 1A

where every member in each county can vote for the directors in every other county.

The board makeup is based on county population and includes nine total directors: three directors from Union County; two directors each from Towns County and Clay County, North Carolina; and one director each from Fannin County and Cherokee County, North Carolina.

Should members vote to approve district voting, starting next year, they will only be able to vote for candidates running in their home county.

Election packets complete with election notices, paper ballots and voting instructions were mailed to members the week of Aug. 6, and mail-in ballots must be received back by Sept. 6.

Online voting opened the week of Aug. 6 via DirectVote.net/BRMEMC, and online voting will close on Sept. 6 ahead of the annual meeting.

Members will also be able to vote in person at the annual meeting, which will be held at the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center on Saturday, Sept. 8, beginning at 8 a.m.