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business.
 "We asked all customers with delinquent taxes past due from 2010 and back to come in and catch them up," Commissioner Knight said. "Since April 24th, when we ran an advertisement to address the delinquent taxes, we have collected a total of \$712,031 of which \$90,300 is interest."

Of the interest alone, the Union County School System received \$59,323 and the county received \$29,650, while the state received \$1,320.

The total amount of delinquent taxes collected since Jan. 2nd, was \$2,283,300 and the interest included in that amount was \$161,062.

The final tally for collected back taxes in 2013 will be in this week.

There were other big stories in Union County, stories that you'll find on this week's pages.

Those stories include the passage of two 1-cent sales tax extensions in the same year.

In March, taxpayers said yes to an extension of the Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax. Sixty-nine percent of those casting ballots said yes to the extension.



Tax Commissioner Lee Knight was a busy man in 2013. Photo/Charles Duncan

In 2008, the referendum for the Educational Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax had promised a Fine Arts Center.

Because funds were running short, and if you begin a project, you must finish a project, the Union County School Board opted not to build the center. There simply wasn't enough money available to complete the Fine Arts Center.

Those plans are now in the works as the school board is in the midst of architectural design of the multi-use/fine arts auditorium.

Paris said.

The projects list for SPLOST IV includes acquisition of the Union County Community Center for \$5.5 million, and County administrative facilities upgrades, improvements, equipment, and vehicles for \$1 million.

Paris said approximately \$100,000 will be used for library upgrades, improvements, and equipment.

Approximately \$1 million will be used for Public Safety facilities, vehicles, and equipment for \$1 million, and \$6 million will be used toward roads, streets, and bridges.

Approximately \$200,000 will be used for Solid Waste upgrades, improvements, and equipment, Paris said.

Peruse the pages this week as we take a close look back at the stories that shaped Union County in 2013.

From adventures at Union County's Farmers Market, to a record-breaking year for the Blairsville Sorghum Festival and coverage of law enforcement, public safety and the reelection of Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley, this week's edition has something for almost every reader.

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who allegedly murdered his 59-year-old daughter Colleen Grant on Sept. 1, has been indicted by a Union County Grand Jury and remains in custody.

Robert Taylor, who allegedly beat his wife Fran Taylor to death in late November, is behind bars awaiting justice in the Union County Jail.

There was also one drowning in Union County, an unfortunate incident where a man lost his bearings and fell in Lake Nottely in May.

The year wasn't all bad news for public safety news as the Blairsville Police Department was named Agency of the Year.

Also, Blue Ridge Post 27 TFC Tony Saunders was named Trooper of the Year.

In November, Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley was elected to a third term, as he soundly defeated challenger Tom Payton by a count of 62-21.

2013 was more than just political intensity, tragedy and public safety in Union County.

It was filled with festivals, the Union County Farmers Market, the 80th Civilian Conservation Corps reunion at Vogel State Park, and a celebration of the 10th Reece Society Annual Meeting.

Union County Schools had significant triumphs in 2013. They finished second in the state in CRCT scoring, and sixth in the state in graduation rates.

The Union County School Board also announced it will apply for Charter School Status.

2013 also saw the Choestoe Community Center come to fruition, as the historic Choestoe School House was saved and restored as an elections precinct and community center in October.

It was one of the many successful projects brought to reality by Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax dollars, projects that included the upgrades at Fire Station 1.

In December, the community was invited to the Union County Senior Center where

funds from a Community Development Block Grant made expansion of the Center possible.

From the Sorghum Fes-

tival to the Butternut Creek Festival to the Scottish Festival and every festive event in 2013, it was a good year to be in Union County.

