

North Georgia News

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Dahlonega man, 20, saved from frigid weather on AT

By Charles Duncan
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A 20-year-old Dahlonega man can thank his lucky stars for an 18-month-old Bloodhound named Lacey.

Then, he can thank Union County firefighters Andy Gwynn and Michael Norton.

The former led rescuers to Ben Emery and his dog Rori, lost just off the Appalachian Trail, the latter provided immediate medical attention that put Emery on the road to recovery.

Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said that search and rescue is a team effort in Union County.

"Lacey and Deputy Jeff McConnell provided the search element, Union County firefighters Andy Gwynn and Michael Norton provided the rescue part of the operation," Sheriff Mason said. "Together



K-9 Deputy Lacey and Deputy Jeff McConnell. Photo/Charles Duncan

as a team, they saved a man's life."

With temperatures in the 20s and a 15-mph wind, Emery was lost after chasing Rori down coming back down the mountain after a visit to the Trail's Shelter on Neel's Gap.

Emery was wearing shorts and a light jacket during his hiking jaunt.

Union County 911 Center received a call of an overdue hiker at approximately 9 p.m. on Jan. 5, Union County Fire Chief and Deputy EMA Director David Dyer said.

Emery, who was hiking



Chief David Dyer

with his dog Rori, got off the trail and was lost.

Details were immediately relayed to Union County Fire and EMA as well as the Union County Sheriff's Office, Chief Dyer said.

Due to the weather and the situation, the urgency to locate Emery was very high, Chief Dyer said.

Union County EMA Director Charles Worden opened the Emergency Operations Center and Fire Chief/Deputy EMA Director Dyer took command of the incident.

Based on pictures that the man sent to his girlfriend during his hike via cellphone, Union County Emergency Management determined Emery's last known place and a possible search area, Chief Dyer said.

"UCFD Capt. Richard Jones set up command operations at Walasi-yi and began conducting a search," Chief Dyer said. "A Georgia State Patrol helicopter with Forward Looking Infra-Red capabilities was dispatched to the scene to assist with the search.

"Union County Search and Rescue teams from Blairsville and Suches were deployed to search the trail," he said. "Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to search the roads surrounding the area."

Lacey and handler Jeff McConnell from the Union County Sheriff's Office arrived at the scene, Chief Dyer said.

"When I arrived, I met with command staff from the



K-9 Deputy Lacey, Union County's prize Bloodhound. Photo/Charles Duncan

fire department and search and rescue." Deputy McConnell said. "I learned that Ben was wearing a light jacket and shorts at the time of his disappearance. His cellphone was dead and he also had his dog Rori, a black lab, was with him."

Union County Firefighter Dustin Lee pointed out Emery's vehicle at Walasi-yi to Deputy McConnell. Emergency personnel unlocked the vehicle to allow Lacey to have a whiff of a scent article, Deputy McConnell said.

Using a shoe and a backpack worn by Emery, Lacey got a good whiff of Emery and was ready to find him, Deputy McConnell said.

The job for Lacey and McConnell, determine which trail Emery and Rori took.

"Lacey went straight to the door of the Walasi-yi

Center, back into the parking lot and across U.S. 129 to the entrance of the Appalachian Trail," Deputy McConnell said. "Once on the trail, you run into a three-way trail. This was the most important part of the search. You don't want to pick the wrong trail and lead a rescue team to the wrong location.

"Location was of the essence, we had to hit the right trail on the first shot," Deputy McConnell said. "It was all up to Lacey and she picked the middle trail."

Lacey, Deputy McConnell and firefighters Gwynn and Norton were moving in the right direction.

An hour and 15 minutes later, approximately 1.3 miles on the trail, Lacey wandered

See Rescue, Page 3A



Sheriff Mack Mason

Union General welcomes New Year's first baby

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
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Welcome to the world, Katilyn Faith Bays.

Katilyn, born at 7:57 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 5, at Union General Hospital to proud parents David and Lisa Bays, was Union County's first baby of 2015.

Delivered by Dr. Kevin Davis, Katilyn weighed in at a healthy 7 pounds, 8 ounces, and was 19 inches long.

Katilyn is just the latest addition to the Bays family.

David and Lisa's first child, Summer, was born exactly one year to the day before Katilyn's arrival.

Summer and Katilyn sharing a birthday seems most fateful, considering that Summer was born two months early, at 2 pounds, 13 ounces,



Katilyn Faith Bays arrived on Jan. 5th. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

due at the time to Lisa's condition of preeclampsia.

"It's a lot harder with two than just one, because

she's jealous," said Lisa of Summer, although that's to be expected when a new child comes on the scene.

Katilyn's middle name, Faith, was chosen to match the family's strong beliefs. There was some concern prior to Katilyn's birth because of Lisa's difficulties with Summer.

"Just our faith in God," said David. "We give him all the glory for it, and it's kind of like to honor Him, because it's through faith that she didn't go early. It was full term, healthy. It was through prayer that that happened, so that's why I picked it."

Lisa's parents, Dewayne and Sandy Carringer, have lived in Union County for a couple of years now, and David and Lisa were married in Blairsville, so the couple has strong roots to the county.

The grandparents are

See First Baby, Page 2A

Statewide deer season now in DNR's hands



By Shawn Jarrard
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The Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division held a Public Input Meeting on the 2015-2017 Regulations

Cycle on Tuesday, Jan. 6. A healthy crowd attended the meeting at the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC headquarters that Tuesday night, which was one of eight meetings in the state.

See Deer Season, Page 2A

Historic business now on Blue Ridge Highway

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

David's Auto and Tire Service Center is a longstanding institution in Blairsville – and it just moved.

For more than 20 years, David Tanner worked on vehicles out of the historic Chevron Building on the Blairsville square, where he built a loyal customer base.

Starting Jan. 5, he began operating about two miles from the square, at 2016 Blue Ridge Highway, between DMI Body Shop and Tony Crosby's Kitchen Cabinets.

"My story begins in May 1990, McCoy Walker and I bought the Chevron Station from Kenneth Gladson," said Tanner. "McCoy and I operated the gas station together until March 1995. I heard about the 1996 Olympics coming to the area and got the idea of starting a cabin rental business.

"In that same month, March 1995, I started building T Ranch Cabins, and also dating my wife to be, Shirley Petry – which she did not know it at the time. It would be a long life of hard work. She helped me to build the



David Tanner of David's Auto and Tire Service has moved his business to 2016 Blue Ridge Highway. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

cabins and business."

After the Olympics, the cabin rentals began to struggle, and Tanner took a job with B&R Construction out of Ellijay.

"In the meantime, I got a call from McCoy, and he wanted to sell the business," said Tanner. "So, Shirley and I bought McCoy out in June 1997."

Tanner worked out of

that same building until late last year, after his landlord decided to take on another business tenant to occupy the space.

But Tanner had sensed the winds of fate swirling before he was ever asked to vacate the building.

Up until about 2009, David's Auto sold gasoline. But with gas prices fluctuating so much in recent years, Tan-

ner had to stop selling gas because he was losing money.

"The city sent one of the councilman out there to talk to me about taking the pumps down and the awning," said Tanner, who in 2014 hadn't sold gas for nearly five years.

Tanner agreed that the pumps and awning should come down, but took that visit as a sign of changes to come.

"Well, I called my landlord, Mark Burrell, and told him, I said, Mark, I've got these truck beds out here, and I need them for storage bad for my stuff," said Tanner. "And I said, I know the city is going to be on to me the next thing about them being out there."

According to Tanner, Burrell informed him that the city had contacted him, too, about the possibility of putting a restaurant in that building instead of a garage.

"He said they've got somebody coming to look at it, and if it's as good a deal as it sounds like, he said, I'll have to go with them," said Tanner.

By the end of October, Tanner had gotten the notice

See David Tanner, Page 3A

Cox, Tallent among Georgia's 100 Most Influential

By Charles Duncan
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Cathy Cox and Jimmy Tallent now share a common bond beyond Young Harris College.

Both have been selected among the 100 Most Influential Georgians by Georgia Trend magazine.

The annual list reflects the state's most powerful and influential citizens who affect the lives and livelihoods of all Georgians.

Others from North Georgia making the list, Gov. Nathan Deal, Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, and Georgia House Speaker David Ralston.

Young Harris College President Cox and Tallent were recently named to Georgia Trend Magazine's 2015 list of 100 Most Influential Georgians.

As the 21st president of YHC, Cox has worked to trans-

See Georgia Trend, Page 2A



Cathy Cox



Jimmy Tallent

Vol. 106 No. 3
2 Sections, 20 Pages
Weather
Thurs: Clouds Hi 47 Lo 26
Fri: Sunny Hi 53 Lo 31
Sat: Sunny Hi 57 Lo 31

Arrests 6A
Church 7A
Classifieds 2B
Opinion 4A
Legals 4B
Obits 8A
Sports 10A

VIETNAM VETERAN
Chapter 1101 Meeting
January 15th
See page 6A

Blood Drive
Jan 27th
Haralson Civic Center
See page 6A

Blairsville Road Changes AHEAD
See Page 6A

SPORTS
UCHS Basketball
Fri, Jan 16 @ Fannin Co 7 PM
Sat, Jan 17 @ Social Circle 3 PM
WRESTLING
Wednesday, January 14 Home