

North Georgia News

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Kings 5&10 building gets new owner; to be restored to past glory

By Charles Duncan
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The Wadle Family, Andrea, Chris, and Baby Brynn. Photo/Charles Duncan

Chris Wadle wasn't around in the hey-day of Kings 5&10.

He's heard countless stories about how the store was once the place where Santa Claus shopped in Blairsville in the decades before his arrival.

Last week, Wadle, his wife Andrea and his infant daughter Brynn became a part of the history of the store that served Blairsville-Union County since 1950.

Wadle, the owner and CEO of Lamin-X, closed on the property last week, and has started an extensive renovation project on the building. Local contractor James Bridges is overseeing the project, Wadle said.

"It's a long-term investment project," Wadle said. "I want to bring the building back to be better than its former glory and still retain the same character."

said.

"It needs a new roof, we'll put a pitch metal roof on it," Wadle said. "The bones of the structure are solid, it's got great bones. We can bring this building back to life and keep that Downtown feeling on the square intact."

Wadle, a member of the Board of Directors of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, has been in the Blairsville-Union County area for 12 years, and it's home to his company, which employs 19 people.

"I have a vested interest here," he said. "I want to help, to do my part. This fell in line as a project that allows me to give back to the community. I've admired this building for some time. I've always believed that it had so much potential."

"When the opportunity to acquire the building arrived, I jumped at it," he said. "Luckily, I have the same vision as the city of Blairsville,



The last known photograph with the Kings 5&10 sign attached to the building was taken last Tuesday during the snowstorm. Photo/Azzarello Photography

See *Renovation*, 3A

Stubborn snow storm grips county; students miss three days of classes



Blairsville was a winter wonderland last week after snow found its way to the mountains. Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said road crews were aided by folks staying off the roads until they were treated. Students missed three days of classes. Photo/Azzarello Photography

By Charles Duncan
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It came with little warning, but the Jan. 28 snowstorm was met with a full response in Union County.

From Tuesday morning until midnight Friday, Road Department workers in Union County diligently strived to clear snow and ice from local roadways.

Union County school bus drivers had their work cut out for them as they returned students to their homes during the rapidly progressing snowstorm.

Thanks to a solid effort from the county Road Department, those students got home safely.

Public safety employees, including the school bus drivers, law enforcement and Road Department workers were obviously the heroes of

the storm.

"I want to thank all public safety personnel who worked so long and hard during Snowstorm Leon," Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said. "We were very fortunate in that while we had a few accidents, mostly it was safe throughout the four days of ice and snow."

Gov. Nathan Deal declared a state of emergency throughout Georgia from Tuesday through Sunday.

"Oddly, one of the most active days was Saturday," Commissioner Paris said. "There were 10 calls to the Fire Department within just a few hours, with a restaurant fire, a heart attack, a restaurant accident and other medical calls. It should be comforting to our citizens to know what skilled public safety people we have in place."

Officers worked around the clock, answering calls and

working snow-related accidents.

"The Union County Sheriff's Office and Blairsville Police Department did a great job as did the Union County Fire Department and our E-911 Communications Center along with the Union General Ambulance Service," Commissioner Paris said. "But I want to give a special call out to our Road Department."

"From the time the storm began Tuesday morning, they had the salt trucks all over the county," Paris said. "They tried to split shifts and from Tuesday around 11 a.m. until midnight on Friday, they never stopped and ran the salt trucks 24/7."

Paris said the storm presented various obstacles that were difficult to manage.

"It seems silly that 2- to

See *Snow*, 2A

Knight: 'More than \$3 million in back taxes collected in 2013'

By Charles Duncan
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Lee Knight

Union County Tax Commissioner Lee Knight and his staff collected more than \$3 million in back taxes in 2013.

They've also collected 90 percent of the 2013 property taxes, Commissioner Knight said.

"For the year 2013, more than \$22 million has been paid to the state, county, and city from property and auto tag ad valorem," Knight said. "The new Georgia TAVT tax on cars has brought in from March 1, 2013 through Dec. 31, more than \$1.9 million, of which Union County kept 43 percent for the county, school, and city.

"We have all worked

hard on the 2010 tax year, and back taxes and have the collection rate for 2012 and back above 97 percent," Knight said. "Our 2013 collection rate right now is at 90 percent. This year, a 10 percent penalty will be added to a past due tax bill for year 2013 if not paid by March 20, as required by Georgia

Law."

Knight and crew have collected \$3,067,901 in delinquent taxes since Jan. 1, 2013.

Tax liens, or Fi Fas, have been filed on 247 Union County properties including mobile homes and personal property such as equipment or inventory.

"We are now working these tax liens through a process," Knight said. "We really want these folks to get in here now and get their taxes caught up. The folks who have not already made arrangements to get their taxes caught up will have liens on their property sold on the courthouse steps on July 1 of this year.

"This is the part of the job that is tough," Knight

See *Taxes*, 3A

No opposition to shotgun park

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Union County and Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris are weeks away from closing a deal that would purchase 9,502 acres off Georgia 515 West for Union County Schools' 4-H Shotgun Team, and eventually a public shooting range, and after last week's public hearing at the Union County Courthouse, the plan hit a bulls-eye with the locals.

The purchase price of the property is \$150,000 with another \$150,000 going into the development of the range. The Union County 4-H will foot \$15,000 of that bill at \$5,000 a year over the next three years.

"They agreed to hold



Mark Alexander expresses his support of the soon to be constructed 4-H Shotgun Park. Photo/Todd Forrest

See *4-H*, 3A

Gooch sponsors SB 299; watershed bill

Do you know how much water a family of four uses in one day?

Let's break down the numbers. A washing machine, on average, uses 25 gallons per load. Brushing your teeth will use one gallon per minute (if you leave the water on). Taking a shower will require two gallons per minute—and that's only if the shower head has been manufactured within the past few years. Older shower heads can use up to five gallons per minute. A dishwasher can use up to 10 gallons of water per load, de-



State Sen. Steve Gooch

pending on the efficiency. Although estimates

vary, an average family of four will use anywhere from 320 - 400 gallons of water in one given day.

Water is an essential element of our daily lives, which means it's important to make sure we are using it conservatively and keeping it free from pollution.

This is why the state of Georgia has set minimum standards for watershed protection.

First of all, because I'm sure many of you are wonder-

See *Gooch*, 2A

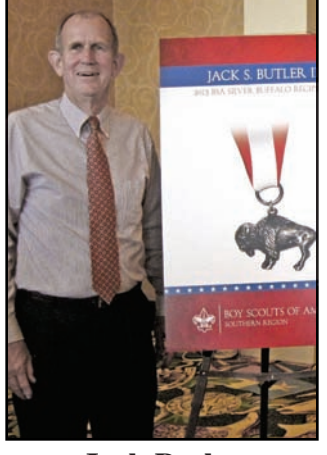
Butler awarded Scouting's highest honor

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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Jack Butler has something in common with Bob Hope, Charles Lindbergh, John Glenn, Neil Armstrong, Bill Gates, and 14 U.S. presidents.

He's the recipient of the Boy Scouts of America's Silver Buffalo Award for Distinguished Service to Youth.

Butler, who lives in Blairsville, and is a member of Coosa United Methodist Church, received the honor



Jack Butler

at The Gaylord Texan in Grapevine, Texas.

Created in 1925, the Silver Buffalo Award for Distinguished Service to Youth, is awarded to those persons who give noteworthy and extraordinary service to youth.

The award is Scouting's highest commendation of invaluable contributions that outstanding Americans make to youth.

To achieve the Silver Buffalo, the service of the nominee must be national in

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