

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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ESPLOST ballot ready for voters to decide

By Charles Duncan
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The Union County School system has collected \$42 million since the state allowed communities to use a penny sales tax for school improvements.

So, what has the school system used those funds for?

They've built a new high school made up of 153,000 square feet, including a new gymnasium. The facility includes a new vocational facility, greenhouse, a sports complex, stadium renovations, and grading for future facilities.

They've also built a new middle school, made up of 100,754 square feet of space that includes a gymnasium, band room, weight room and computer laboratories.

They renovated the elementary school, put a new



The Union County School system's referendum would extend the current sales tax for five years and is projected to bring in \$21 million. Photo/Todd Forrest

New offices were constructed at The Primary School and computer laboratories were constructed. At Woody Gap School, a 19,825 square-foot gymna-

sium was built. The Rock Building was renovated, and a new kitchen/cafeteria/media center was added.

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Communications woes under investigation

By Charles Duncan
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Union and Towns counties were trapped in the dark ages for almost two hours last week as a major communications failure left both counties without cable, phone service, Internet and cell phone service.

The massive communications outage occurred at approximately 6:30 p.m. on Monday.

All land telephone lines of Windstream, cell phone coverage by Verizon and AT&T and Union County's E-911 system went dark on Monday evening, Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said.

"It was in Towns and Union that we know of so far," Paris said. "There will



Lamar Paris

be a serious investigation of what happened and why.

"This is naturally of major concern to all counties involved," Paris said. "Fortunately, during the outage of more than an hour, we were very fortunate that no emer-

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Lawmakers hear the TAVT pleas



Wednesday was a banner day as state lawmakers made sure that persons who bought vehicles out of state over the last 14 months can opt into the new TAVT laws. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

By Charles Duncan
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If you purchased a vehicle in another state over the last 14 months when you go to the Tax Commissioner's Office at the Union County Courthouse.

Georgia lawmakers amended the Title Ad Valorem Tax to allow sales tax paid to

Georgia through out-of-state purchases to count toward the title tax that took root March 1.

Union County Tax Commissioner Lee Knight said that the state law has been amended and a vehicle purchased outside of Georgia may be eligible to opt-in if all the other opt-in requirements are met.

Before March 6, if you

had purchased a vehicle in another state, even though the 7 percent sales tax was paid to the state, vehicle owners still had to pay the 6.5 percent title tax in Georgia.

State lawmakers realized the problem and corrected it last week.

And just last week, Knight encountered his first

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Paris: 'Lowe's Mill could reopen next week'

By Charles Duncan
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Lowe's Mill Road soon will be back in working order, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said last week.

The roadway was heavily damaged during one of the Jan. 30th flood events.

Commissioner Paris expects the road to reopen soon, possibly next week, he said.

"We hope to have it open some time next week, all except the paving," Paris said. "Once the weather cooperates, we will then come back and work on the paving. That will require the road be closed for an additional day or two.

"Once this project is completed, we should not have any future problems un-



Roadwork continues on Lowe's Mill, which was washed out during torrential rains on Jan. 30th. Photo/Todd Forrest

less we ever have a catastrophic flood event," Paris said.

The Georgia Department of Transportation is assisting the county with the project's completion, Paris

said.

The project includes replacing culverts to improve the flow of storm water and

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Modern Vinyl wows The Hall

By Libby Shook
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Who would have thought that legendary music icons Three Dog Night would come all the way to Hiawassee to close for local band Modern Vinyl.

The Blairsville band made up of guitarist and lead vocalist Patrick Smith, guitarist and vocalist Connor Smith, bassist Todd Forrest (sports editor for the North Georgia News), and drummer Micah Tanner, brought down the house with their groundbreaking performance at Anderson Music Hall.

From the moment they stepped out on stage, they owned it.

They put on a show Las Vegas style with their classic rock hits *You Really Got Me*, *Born to Be Wild*, *Superstition*, and *Foxy Lady*.

But when they performed The Beatles' *Come Together*, they had the crowd in the palm of their hand.

Folks were up dancing in the aisles, snapping photos, screaming, and wildly applauding this up and coming young Rock band.

Everybody was amazed at the talent Modern Vinyl brought to the stage.

They've got the sound;



And The Band played on at Anderson Music Hall. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

they've got the look, they've got the moves; and after Saturday's performance, they've definitely got a much broader fan-base.

There was just no quit in them and they definitely let the crowd wanting more.

This is definitely a band to contend with and Connie Marcos of Norcross said, "They were awesome. They will have somebody opening for them before too much longer."

Betty Elliott of Gainesville said, "I wonder if Three Dog Night can top this?"

This was the general consensus of the fans as they stood around talking about how talented Modern Vinyl was as they waited for Three Dog Night to come out on stage.

Phillip Newman of Conyers said, "It's not often you hear a band of this magnitude and talent as an opening

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Wanted suspect nabbed in Cherokee

By Charles Duncan
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Union County Sheriff Mack Mason says his department has solved a theft of property case.

Also, the sheriff says a search of Union County Schools resulted in four juveniles being disciplined for marijuana possession.

First, Union County sheriff's Detective Darren Osborn has arrested Michael Millwood, 20 of Bartow County related to the theft of metal forms belonging to a local construction company, Sheriff Mason said.

Millwood was arrested in Cherokee County, in Canton, following a routine traffic stop, the sheriff said.

The stolen forms were cut up with a power torch and sold for scrap metal in Bartow County, Sheriff Mason said.

"Mr. Millwood broke



Michael Millwood

down and rolled on his accomplice," Sheriff Mason said. "We've got warrants for that individual, and he's down in South Georgia."

According to Detective Osborn, the Union County Sheriff's Office secured videotape of Millwood driving his vehicle over scales at a scrap yard in Bartow County with the cut up forms in the back of

the vehicle.

The Bartow County Sheriff's Office assisted in the investigation, Detective Osborn said.

Millwood, who has been on the lam since February, and was listed as one of Union County's Most Wanted, was arrested for his Union County charges after he was taken into custody in Cherokee County, Detective Osborn said.

"Cherokee County got him on a traffic stop," Osborn said. "Mr. Millwood confessed to everything, and he turned evidence on his accomplice, David Hartley.

"We now have outstanding warrants on Mr. Hartley," Osborn said.

Sheriff Mason was disgusted by the crime.

"I don't know what this world is coming to when you steal the tools of a man's trade," Sheriff Mason said.

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Burglary suspect nabbed in Murphy, NC

Also, Sheriff Mason warns residents to beware of scams

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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Union County Sheriff Mack Mason says one individual is in custody in Murphy, NC related to a burglary here where \$5,000 worth of guns and coins were stolen.

Tyler Gibbs, 18, of Murphy, NC, also is being held on drug charges in Murphy, after authorities learned he was staying at an extended stay motel in Murphy and discovered a large quantity of methamphetamine, Sheriff Mason said.

Union County Sher-



Sheriff Mack Mason

iff's Detective Darren Osborn was the lead investigator in the case, as authorities here searched for stolen shotguns, a Glock 9mm handgun, and

various stolen gold and silver coins, Sheriff Mason said.

Detective Osborn got a tip that Gibbs was holed up in a motel in Murphy, the sheriff said. Authorities in Cherokee County, NC and the Murphy Police Department were contacted to assist with the case, Detective Osborn said.

"Sure enough, he was at the hotel with another individual," Osborn said. "As part of the investigation, and a search of the motel room the two were staying in, a large quantity of methamphetamine was discovered in the motel room."

Gibbs currently is being held

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DISCOVER CHURCH PRESENTS
THE EGG DROP
along with Union County Recreation Dept.
Sat., March 23 • 12 noon
Meeks Park
Entrance Fee: At least 2 non-perishable food item to donate to the local food bank
www.blairsvilleeggdrops.com
In case of rain, the event will be rescheduled for Sunday, March 24 at 2 p.m.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM
Now Accepting New Volunteers
April 11 • 6:30pm
Fire Dept. Station 3
14 Waldroup Rd
Anyone 18 yrs. or older
Applications Available at Stations 1 & 5 and online

Woody Gap Spaghetti Dinner & Annual Gong/Talent Show
Sat., March 16
Spaghetti Dinner: 4-6 p.m.
Gong/Talent Show: 6 p.m.
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UCHS Baseball
March 12 • 5:30 p.m. vs. Rabun

UCHS Soccer
March 12 • 5 & 7 p.m. vs. Fannin
March 15 • 5 & 7 p.m. vs. Greene

UCHS Golf
March 12 • 3:30 p.m. @ Pickens - Big Canoe Golf Course