

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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## Blairsville Police Department named 2012 Agency of the Year

By Joe Collins  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll was all smiles on Friday night – and, with good reason.

The Blairsville Police Department was named Agency of the Year at the annual Mothers Against Drunk Drivers Banquet at the Union County Community Center.

The award honors the Blairsville Police Department for protecting its citizens and recognizes the agency for the work they do toward achieving the goals of MADD.

Blairsville Police Department also won the



Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll, center, is flanked by dedicated members of his department. Photo/Joe Collins

award in 2008, Chief Carroll said.

"We only patrol about 1 square mile of ter-

ritory," Chief Carroll said. "But, as they tell me, it's

not how much territory you cover, it's how aggressive

you patrol that territory. I'm real proud of my officers. They're a dedicated bunch."

MADD honored law enforcement agencies that represent the Appalachian Trail Traffic Enforcement Network. The ATTEN covers seven counties from Cherokee County north and includes Union and Towns counties.

The banquet honored local law enforcement agencies, as well as the Georgia State troopers that work in those counties, that go above and beyond the call of duty to keep our highways safe from drunk drivers.

In addition to Agency of the Year, Chief Car-

roll was beaming over the fact that his department brought home another coveted award.

Blairsville Police Officer Dustin Walker took home the coveted 2012 Rookie of the Year Award for his work on the Blairsville force and the extra effort he displayed as an officer of the award-winning department.

More than 100 law enforcement officers were on hand at the annual awards banquet.

Blairsville police Lt. Russell Walker also was honored with the 2012 Dedicated Commitment Award for the work he does to protect and serve the people of our area and

for enforcing the DUI laws in a way that is above and beyond the call of duty.

The Union County Sheriff's Office also received coveted awards.

Like Lt. Walker, Union County Sheriff's Lt. Chad Deyton was honored with the 2012 Dedicated Commitment Award for going above and beyond the call of duty.

Hiawassee Police Department's Lewis Baxter and Young Harris College Police Officer Robbie Rich also received 2012 Dedicated Commitment Awards.

And the highlight of the evening, Union

See *MADD Awards*, Page 2A

## Mason: 'the first homicides of 2013 still under investigation'



Anthony Payne

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
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A double homicide in rural Union County last week, and the death of a person of interest in Cherokee County, GA were all too related – literally.

Anthony Payne, 34, of Canton, formerly of Blairsville, was shot and killed following a confrontation with Cherokee County, GA authorities, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

Anthony Payne is the lone person of interest in the Tuesday shooting deaths of his father, Charlie Payne, 59, and his stepmother Louise Payne, 67.



Union County Sheriff Mack Mason interviews Charlie and Louise Payne's neighbors on Nottely Dam Road. Photo/Charles Duncan

The couple's bodies were discovered Thursday by family members at their home at 1098 Nottely Dam Road, Sheriff Mason said.

"This is one of those incidents that can bring a community to its knees," Sheriff Mason said. "It's heart-break-

ing, not only for the family, but for the friends and neighbors. It's something that no community wants to experience, but, it happens, even here in Union County."

Anthony Payne died after he fired on Cherokee

See *Murder*, Page 6A

## Rain doesn't stop Awake America Prayer Service

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Almost 100 people from Union, Towns and Fannin counties, as well as North Carolina packed Blairsville City Hall for praise and singing on a rainy Thursday morning for the inaugural monthly Awake America Community Prayer Meeting at City Hall.

Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley opened the meeting for the packed house at 11:59 a.m. with a welcome and the invocation.

"I didn't realize that we'd have this many people here on a rainy day like today," Mayor Conley said. "That tells me that had it been a pretty day, we'd probably have a parking lot full. We may wind up having to get a larger area than what



Blairsville City Hall was packed on Thursday. Photo/Todd Forrest

we have, to accommodate everyone that is coming out."

After Mayor Conley's welcome, a moment of silence was observed before the mayor gave the invocation.

Union County Sheriff Mack Mason led the prayer of Allegiance and the prayer for our Armed Forces.

"Before we have a

See *Prayer*, Page 3A

## Big Breakfast draws a crowd

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
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Saturday was a time for fellowship and big appetites at the annual Allegheny Lodge No. 114 Big Country Breakfast on Rogers Street.

More than 125 people broke bread at the Lodge as they enjoyed a feast of biscuits, gravy, sausage, bacon, eggs, grits and pancakes.

It was an all-you-can-eat affair, and you couldn't beat the price, \$6.

The four-hour event is one of the Lodge's big fundraisers each year. It's a bit different from most breakfast fundraisers because it's all-you-can-eat, said Allegheny No. 114 Worshipful Master Doug Shear.

"It's definitely a bargain," Shear said. "We had a great turnout as usual. We want to thank the folks who came and broke bread with us today. We know that they didn't go home hungry. We don't just serve pancakes and sausage.



Servers at Allegheny Lodge No. 114's Big Country Breakfast were busy on Saturday. Photo/Charles Duncan

"We break out the works. And that comes with coffee, juice and tea. What ever you want," he said.

The proceeds of the event go toward local scholarships, food boxes during

hard times, to helping families at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and to the Masonic Homes, and the Widow's Fund.

"We couldn't have pulled this

See *Breakfast*, Page 2A

## Community honors Davenport

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Leon Davenport sat beside his father in a folding chair, inconspicuous and looking like a face in the crowd on Friday at the Union County Veterans Building off Georgia 515.

If you didn't already know Leon Davenport, you would have thought he was just one of the many to attend the ceremony to rename the Veterans Building.

A humbled human being, Leon Davenport doesn't wear his patriotism on his sleeve. No, he's the model image of the old adage that *actions speak louder than words*.

U.S. Army Major (retired) Leon Davenport is one of the most decorated soldiers in the history of these United States, having served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Union County and our nation can rejoice in the daily virtues of freedom thanks to soldiers like Leon Davenport. And now, Union County Veterans' Building on Georgia 515 West, just beyond the Park and Ride, will forever be known as the "Major Leon Davenport Veterans Building."



U.S. Army Major (retired) Leon Davenport wears his veteran's cap at the ceremony which named the Veterans Building in his honor. Photo/Todd Forrest

During a ceremony held Friday morning, retired Major Gen. Jerry Akin and Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris honored Leon Davenport before unveiling a wooden sign, officially renaming the building after the county's most decorated veteran.

"We are assembled here today for a very momentous occasion," Paris told the crowd during a crisp, early April morning. "It's an honor to be apart of this dedication today for me personally and it's very humbling. We are

honoring a true American hero that our country is so proud of."

According to Paris not many realized the magnitude of Davenport's military accolades until recently.

"Major Leon Davenport kept most of heroics a secret for many years, and not until the last few years have we been able to discover the true value of this patriot that was in our county."

Major Gen. Akin met with Davenport a few weeks back following a discussion

See *Davenport*, Page 3A

## Echols talks PSC at Rotary Club

By Joe Collins  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

District 2 Georgia Public Service Commissioner Tim Echols was the guest speaker at the weekly meeting of the Union County Rotary Club at the Union County Community Center last week.

Echols focused on the three public concerns that the PSC is responsible for, telecommunications, electricity and natural gas.

Echols is an outspoken critic of the nuclear waste that is still sitting at both the Georgia nuclear facilities that



See *Echols*, Page 6A

Vol. 104 No. 16  
2 Sections, 24 Pages  
Weather  
Wed: Clouds Hi 77 Lo 56  
Thu: Storms Hi 67 Lo 45  
Fri: Clouds Hi 60 Lo 37

Inside  
Arrests 8A  
Church 9A  
Classified 2B  
Opinion 4A  
Legal 6B  
Obits 10A  
Sports 14A, 15A

**Trash & Treasures**  
Open at the  
**Friday, April 12**

**FARMERS MARKET**  
Home Grown & Handmade

See page 8A

**Blairsville Kiwanis Mountain Fair**  
April 9-14  
Union County Industrial Park on Airport Rd.

**Blairsville Garden Club Annual Plant Sale**  
April 27  
7:30am - 1 pm  
Union County Farmers Market

See page 7A

**UCHS Baseball**  
Tues., April 9 • 5:55 p.m. vs. Jefferson  
Thurs., April 11 • 4:30 p.m. @ Hayesville, NC

**UCHS Soccer**  
Tues., April 9 • 5 & 7 p.m. vs. White Co.  
Fri., April 12 • 6 p.m. @ Riverside

**Woody Gap Tennis**  
Thurs., April 11 • 4 p.m. @ Dawson Co.