

# Patriots...from Page 1A

"The militia were citizen soldiers, and they were formed in militias to protect their frontier settlements, and when things got bad they would just call the militia together, and they would meet, and then they would go out and do what they needed to do. They could wear basically anything that they had. And no two really looked alike," Turner explained.

When uniforms were scarce, George Washington ordered frock coats for the Continental Army similar to what the militia wore.

"They were warm and it kept the soldiers protected," Turner said.

In fact, the militia played an integral role in the war effort in more ways than one.

"They were used pretty much in the beginning," Turner explained. "There at Lexington and Concord and



at Bunker Hill, it was pretty much extensively all militia. And then in the South, where you had the big battles that beat Cornwallis, they were all militia."

Even when large parts of the Continental Army were routed or captured, the militia continued to fight the British using guerilla tactics they learned in frontier battles with

the Native Americans.

"The militia kept the fight going after the Continentals were captured at Savannah and Charleston," said Turner. "They're the ones who really won the Southern campaign. And you could build a case for the Southern campaign helping win the whole Revolutionary War."

## City Council approves GDOT contract

By Shawn Jarrard  
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Staff Writer

Mayor Jim Conley and the Blairsville City Council met at city hall for their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 7.

One item on the agenda was the approval of a contract and engineering fees associated with the Georgia Department of Transportation for the south ramp rehabilitation project at the Blairsville Airport.

The council voted unanimously to approve a contract with BWSC Engineering for fees totaling \$69,743.

Every year, the federal government allocates a certain amount of money for local transportation projects, money that is distributed to the city through the Georgia Department of Transportation.

The south ramp at the airport has experienced cracked and breaking pavement from use over time, which has become a safety concern for the city.

Initially, the city believed resurfacing would get the job done, but DOT regulations required that the ramp be repaved.

Money for the project will be funded between 90-95 percent with federal funds. The state will pick up a matching amount in conjunction with the city, the state paying between 2.5-5 percent, and the city paying between 2.5-5 percent, according to city hall.

The city will not know the total cost of the project



until a contract is awarded, and city hall expects to start advertising for bids on the project soon. Early estimates for repaving the south ramp are around \$500,000, according to city hall.

In other news, city council approved the 2014 budget revisions.

Budget revisions are completed annually, and take into account final budget amounts for the prior fiscal year.

The city operates on a fiscal year that runs from January 1 to December 31, and some invoices arrive following the end of a fiscal year.

For example, an invoice dated December of 2014 might not arrive at city hall until January or February of 2015, in which case the 2014 budget still needs to reflect those amounts in its final totals.

The original 2014 budget, adopted on Oct. 1, 2013, called for total operating revenue and operating expenditure in 2014 of \$3,746,010, with the amended budget reflecting an actual operating revenue and operating expenditure of \$3,837,579.

Also in the meeting, Blairsville Downtown Development Authority Program Manager Darren Harper spoke on the latest news concerning the Haralson Property.

"As I mentioned in my last update to the city council,

we have received approval from the Army Corps of Engineers and have purchased the necessary mitigation credits as outlined by the Corps," said Harper in a report prepared for the meeting.

Georgia Streambank LLC is providing 1,400 credits for \$28,000, while Georgia Land Trust LLC is supplying 1.7 credits for \$48,195.

"Our projected costs for these two items were estimated to be higher, so we are happy to have lower costs for each," said Harper. "Currently, H&H Resources has provided the GDOT with finalized off-ramp plans, and we are awaiting their approval. We anticipate approval within the next few weeks.

"Once approved, the bidding process for the new off ramp construction (is) to start sometime around the first of May 2015. Actual construction will begin after the contract is awarded, which should occur mid-July.

Once the off ramp is constructed, the city can begin promoting the sale of the property to bring businesses to the downtown area, according to city hall.

Blairsville Chief of Police Johnny Carroll reported in the meeting that there were 114 total calls for assistance in March 2015, with total calls for the year coming in at 308. Total patrol miles for March were 5,991.

## DDA has busy schedule

By Shawn Jarrard  
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Darren Harper, program manager of the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority, is keeping busy getting Downtown ready to host several upcoming events.

The Spring Arts, Crafts and Music Festival starts Memorial Day Weekend on Friday, May 22, with a concert at the historic courthouse at 6 p.m.

Beginning Saturday, May 23, the festival itself kicks off between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Festivities for Saturday include a 10 a.m. Memorial Day Parade and a special concert at the courthouse at 6 p.m.

Sunday's events run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the entire weekend will play host to close to 30 musical acts.

"We're doing a lot more music," said Harper. "We'll have the concert on that Friday night, we'll have music at the courthouse on Saturday night, and there will be music in and around the courthouse and the Mountain Life Museum both Saturday and Sunday. Everything from Bluegrass to Gospel."

More than 70 vendors from all over the region will be available throughout the festival, showcasing their homemade wares, including jewelry, pottery and more.

"We are still looking to add vendors, so if somebody wants to participate, they can contact the Union County His-

torical Society and get registered," said Harper.

Also coming through the downtown area is the First Annual Georgia Mountain Metric Century, a bike race from Randy and Marianne Denniston of Blairsville Bikes & Hikes.

The Georgia Mountain Metric Century is a world-class riding area famously known as Six Gap in both the bicycling and motorcycling communities.

The bicycle ride will feature a journey over Hog Pen, Unicoi and Jacks gaps, and will run through Blairsville, beginning and ending at the Haralson Memorial Civic Center.

"For more information, people can contact Randy Denniston at 706) 745-8141, or they can stop by Blairsville Bikes & Hikes at 49 Blue Ridge Street," Harper said.

Parties interested in registering may also visit the event's Facebook page by searching for the name of the event.

And on Wednesday, April 29, Harper will be holding a Great American Cleanup Informational Meeting at 6 p.m. at Blairsville City Hall.

"The actual cleanup date will be Saturday, May 9, at 10 a.m., and it's both citywide and countywide."

Harper will lead a group focused on cleaning up the downtown area on May 9, but several groups will also be formed to concentrate on side streets as well.

Those interested in joining the cleanup should contact Harper.