

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

www.nganews.com

Legal Organ of Union County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1909

May 20, 2015

Seniors are ready to walk the aisle

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Union County High School Principal John Hill sheds a tear when he thinks about the departing Class of 2015.

"This is one of the most talented group of kids that I've seen in my educational career," Hill said. "They are academically outstanding, they are good citizens, and they seem to care for their fellow man and less fortunate. I've been impressed how they treat students with disabilities and some of the less fortunate kids. They're very good to those kids. They do a lot of community outreach, and initiatives to help people."



Rachel Todd



Katherine Sanchez



Holly Harkins



Nina Sattler

"That's one of the things about this class that impresses me the most," Hill said. "Obviously, they are a very talented group academically. Our valedictorian (Rachel Todd) will be attending Princeton in the fall. Athletically, they're a very talented group of young people. This group is very dear to my heart because the senior football players were there during my last year of coaching, so they're pretty close to me and very important."

Graduation exercises take place Friday, May 22, at 8 p.m. at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium for 166 seniors. Rachel Todd is the Class of 2015 Valedictorian.

See *Grads*, Page 2A

Henson ready for a challenge

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

One way or another, Danny Henson was going to be on the ballot for the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC board of directors for Union County.

Henson, who was appointed by the EMC Board of Directors to fill the seat of Bob Ensley, who resigned for health reasons, and later died, already had a petition to be on the ballot with more than 300-plus signatures.

"I'm looking forward to this election," Henson said. "It's always nice to give back to the people that have been good to you. This community has been good to me."

Henson was raised in the Belleview Community.



Danny Henson

He said he never had much growing up - "we were poor, but didn't know it."

"Dad was a carpenter, he worked in Atlanta and he had the only vehicle that we had," Henson said. "I remember getting groceries off the store truck. Things have really

See *Henson*, Page 2A

Union County seniors ready for the next big step

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Blairsville's First Baptist played host to the Union County High School Baccalaureate Service as more than 160 seniors took part in a church service dedicated to their excellence in numerous endeavors, not only at school, but also in their personal lives over the past 17 or 18 years.

The Baccalaureate was not only a celebration of their multiple accolades, the service was an opportunity for elders, as well as peers, to provide a guiding light for the prosperous and productive path that lies ahead of the Class of 2015, as well as the knowledge to avoid the pitfalls and the faith to resist the snares of a materialistic world.

During the service's Benediction, Doug Smith perfectly summed up the Class of



The Union County High School Ensemble sings *You are the Music in Me*. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

2015. "I could not be more proud of you," he said. "In a selfie world, you are selfless. In a small town, you're global. You will go further and do more than I could ever imagine."

Senior Lisa Nalasci opened the service with a welcome and a thank you to the Union County High School Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) for sponsoring the Baccalaureate, FCA Sponsor Howard McCombs, Dr. Patri-

cia Slagle, Rick Silver, and Jackie Hill.

During the Invocation, Pastor Bill Schakat of Redeemer Baptist Church challenged the senior class to

See *Baccalaureate*, Page 2A

Memorial Day Parade set for Saturday on Downtown Square

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

The Annual Memorial Day Parade takes place Saturday, May 23 in downtown Blairsville.

The Blairsville - Union County Memorial Day Parade Committee invites locals to attend and participate in the parade, which will start at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 23, 2015.

U.S. Navy retired Jimmy Morrison will serve as the 2015 Parade Grand Marshal.

The parade route will wind around the Historic Courthouse and end at the



Union County War Memorial Park.

Afterwards, please join our veterans at the park for a Memorial Day ceremony that will begin shortly after the parade concludes. This year's

See *Memorial*, Page 2A

Union FFA Banquet packs a crowd

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Union County FFA students led their annual banquet in the spacious House of Prayer Fellowship Hall on Friday, May 15.

The meeting was a celebration of sorts, giving the students the chance to recognize one another and those in the community that have furthered their efforts this school year. The event also commemorated the 75th anniversary of the FFA program coming to Union County.

Before the banquet began, visitors were treated to a video produced by the students, many of them officers and some of them up and coming officers.

"When I first joined the FFA, I didn't know anything about it or even what the



The 2014-15 FFA officers pay tribute to their FFA advisor John Clark Pettit on Friday. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

point of it was," said Andrew Collins, who was elected to the office of Reporter for the 2015-2016 school year. "But after a while, I learned that it was all about commitment

and doing your best to achieve things."

And these students had certainly achieved their best Friday night, as the entire room, consisting of more than

150 in attendance, spent the next few hours engrossed in the accomplishments of the primarily student-run FFA.

"The biggest part of the

See *FFA*, Page 3A

Arts & Crafts Festival set for weekend

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The 2015 Spring Arts, Crafts & Music Festival begins Friday, May 22 with a special concert at the Historic Union County Courthouse at 6 p.m., said Downtown Development Authority Program Director Darren Harper.

"We've got a lot of participation this year," Harper said. "We are up to 53 vendors on the square. We've also brought in some organizations, like Forestry Service, the John C. Campbell Folk School - groups that kind of highlight what's going on in our region."

The festival starts Me-



Darren Harper

morial Day Weekend on Friday, May 22, with a concert at the historic courthouse at 6 p.m.

Beginning Saturday, May 23, the festival itself

See *Festival*, Page 2A

Mayor: Bid process next step for Haralson Ramp Project

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Blairsville Downtown Development Authority held its regular board of directors meeting on Tuesday, May 12, at City Hall.

In the meeting engineer Wayne Fowler of H&H Resources presented the board with the latest details concerning the Haralson Development Project.

The project aims to replace the old ramp leading from Highway 515 to Pat Haralson Drive with an extended ramp, one that will allow spaces for businesses to build closer to the square. The area will also provide more greenspace around the downtown area.

As of now, the DDA is advertising the bidding process for contractors. There will be a June 2 mandatory pre-bid meeting, in which contractors can ask questions about the project and express concerns over the plans.

Bids are slated to be opened June 16, and the bids will take about a week to process, at which time there will be a notice of award. The estimated start date for the proj-



Wayne Fowler

ect is around July 20, which will give the bid winner a few weeks to secure bonds for the project and turn in all of their paperwork.

The Georgia Department of Transportation has agreed to kick in \$250,000 worth of funding toward the project if it is under construction by Aug. 1.

Fowler pointed out some interesting aspects of the plans to the DDA board.

"We are converting the intersection at Young Harris Street to a four-way stop," said Fowler. "The DOT is having us do some striping out on the four-lane to convert that center turn lane into a dedicated

See *Project*, Page 2A

There is Hope for those with addictions

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

It's difficult enough to talk about personal accolades in front of a crowd of people.

Try to talk about your personal disappointments.

That's exactly what three young women did on Saturday evening at First United Methodist Church in Blairsville.

Kacie Young, Sherlay Noel, and Candace Lopez were three voices of victory. Young detailed her struggles with alcohol, Noel shared her battles with suicide attempts and Lopez shared her personal attempt to overcome an eating disorder and addictions to alcohol and drugs.

The stories detailed the personal struggles of the three young ladies, and the turmoil their struggles put their families through. Ultimately, each



Candace Lopez tells her story at Hope Benefit at First United Methodist Church on Saturday evening. Photo/Charles Duncan

and every member of their families felt the pain of their personal struggles.

The stories were part of a benefit called Hope to help raise \$2,500 for a 501-c3 nonprofit corporation to make America aware of the life problems facing young

people. The long-term goal is to open a Christ-centered home for teens to help them with their personal addictions.

The event featured a silent auction of items offered by locals, businesses and civic organizations to help benefit

the ultimate goal of a Christ-based treatment center for young people with addictions.

Lopez hosted the event with the help of family and friends.

Barbara Honaker, acting coordinator for Union County Drug Court, said the event featuring the personal stories of the three young ladies, was very exposing.

"To be able to share those experiences, they know they're probably going to help someone else," Honaker said. "The stories can help someone else to reveal their problems. If these stories can help just one person to be able to pull out of themselves the addiction that they are experiencing, then that's really something special."

Honaker learned about

See *Hope*, Page 3A

Vol. 106 No. 21

4 Sections, 38 Pages

Weather

Thurs: Clouds Hi 83 Lo 55

Fri: Sunny Hi 81 Lo 57

Sat: Sunny Hi 81 Lo 61

Arrests 8A

Church 10A

Classifieds 3B

Opinion 4A

Legals 6B

Obits 12A

Sports 14A

Congratulations, Graduates!