

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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June 20, 2012

## KKK recruiting date off, KKK Rally date is on

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
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One of two days set aside for handing out literature and a Rally on the Union County Courthouse Square by the International Keystone Knights of the Realm of the Ku Klux Klan is off.

The city of Blairsville has approved both application requests by April Chambers and Harley Hanson. The dates approved are Sept. 8 and Oct. 6, according to city of Blairsville records.

Chambers, who applied for the city permit to hand out literature on Sept. 8 said it's unclear if that event will take place.

"We don't know at this time

if it will or not," she said in an interview on Sunday with the North Georgia News.

However, the Imperial Wizard of the International Keystone Knights of the Realm of the Ku Klux Klan, said the Oct. 6 rally on the Courthouse Square is a go.

"The International Keystone Knights of the KKK will speak to the public on Oct. 6 in person at the Union County Courthouse in front of Commissioner Lamar Paris' office so there will be no misinterpretation or twisted words from the press," said the IKK's Imperial Wizard, who declined to identify himself in a telephone interview with the North Georgia News on Monday morning. "Thank you Mr.

Editor, have a great day."

He later added that the Sept. 8 date is a no go for the Klan.

Hanson, identified in media reports as the IKK's "exalted cyclops," a term symbolic of a local mayor, signed the document for the city permit for the Oct. 6 KKK rally, city records show.

The literature handout day and KKK rally requests follow a request to adopt a one mile stretch of road from the Fannin County line and into Union County, Georgia Department of Transportation records show.

GDOT denied the Adopt-A-Highway request, citing that the speed limit on the stretch of roadway was greater than the required 55 mph for adopt-

ing a stretch of roadway.

Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley said the city's decision to approve the permits for literature handouts and a KKK rally was simple.

"We don't want to be sued," he said.

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris is a little more direct about the KKK picking up trash in Union County.

"Union County Government regrets the controversy that has developed on Highway 515," Commissioner Paris said. "While we appreciate the fact that someone else from another county may be interested in picking

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Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris says thanks, but no thanks to KKK's offer to clean up a one-mile stretch of Highway 515. GDOT denied the Klan's application.

## Tentative budget set at \$24.42 million by BOE

By Charles Duncan  
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The Union County Board of Education is advertising its tentative 2012-2013 Fiscal Budget this week. The board faced a shortfall of \$1.762 million prior to preparation of the tentative budget. Superintendent Gary Steppe was faced with the task of making major cuts to the budget and that's exactly what he did.

The tentative budget comes in with \$3,966.88 to spare when expenditures are subtracted from revenues, county records show. The budget includes money from state, federal and Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax that is not included in the final \$24.424 million budget, county records show. The state, federal and SPLOST dollars must be spent on specific items and cannot be used to pay salaries. BOE Commission Chair Gary Davenport said the budget cuts were difficult.

"But we certainly didn't want to go back to the taxpayers and ask for more money," he said. "Times are tough and we've got a lot of folks that are hurting."

"We've heard from them loud and clear and they're hurting themselves," he said.



Chairman Gary Davenport

The board eliminated eight certified positions and 11 classified positions. The board voted last Wednesday night to only have five furlough days for the 2012-2013 school year. One furlough day equals \$80,000 for the school budget, Chairman Davenport said. The board will meet in a called session on June 28 in the board conference room at 8 a.m. With the purpose of finalizing the 2012-2013 Fiscal Budget.

"We've got to get this completed by July 1," Chairman Davenport said. A shortfall of revenues combined with increased financial burdens imposed by state cutbacks, increased Lo-

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## Record weekend crowd at Farmers Market

By Charles Duncan  
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Saturday was like a festival on Old Smokey Road just outside Blairsville.

More than 4,000 people assembled, although not all at the same time. The attraction: a sure deal at the Union County Farmers Market.

For those that got there early, there were fresh green beans, the second week the tasty treat would be available. Also, there was plenty of cabbage, cucumbers, banana peppers, fresh broccoli, onions, collard greens, squash, potatoes and a few tomatoes.

There also were two vendors selling local honey, some selling plants and flowers, and numerous vendors hawking their crafts that included handcrafted signs, handbags, lotions and creams. There were vendors selling hot boiled peanuts, wrap sensation sandwiches, fruit cups, fruit bowls and Dot Patterson was selling her trademark and delicious squash pickles.

All-in-all, it was just another Saturday at the Farmers

Market with one noted exception: there were about 2,500 more people on this Saturday than the previous gathering.

"And you know what's surprising, we're open on Tuesdays from 3 p.m. To 7 p.m. but I bet we don't average 300 people coming out looking for bargains," said vendor Will Kerr. "It would be nice if we could get some more folks out here on Tuesday."

Kerr said his sweet corn was about to come in. "I know the numbers will pick up when the sweet corn and the tomatoes start coming in," he said.

Freddie Collins, who sold quite a few collards and baskets of squash, said business seems to be picking up quite a bit. "The numbers are getting better," he said. "There were a lot of people here today and they weren't just looking, they were buying."

Union County Extension Agent Mickey Cummings said the Saturday event went well.

"We had a much larger crowd this week than we did last week," he said. "It was a



Freddie Collins talks fresh produce on Saturday at the Market. good crowd. We had a lot of green beans for sale, a lot of potatoes for sale. We had radishes, cucumbers, collards, broccoli, purple and green cabbage, and I'm told that next week we're going to have sweet corn for sale.

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## Union, Towns CRCT scores among tops in Region again

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
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Union County Schools have much to be proud of as the 2012 Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests come in.

"The best news in the 2012 CRCT report is that more of our students are exceeding the standards," said State School Superintendent Dr. John Barge. "Teachers are doing a great job teaching the more rigorous Georgia Performance Standards and they are to be applauded for raising expectations for all students."

In Union County, teachers are doing a whale of a job as students, with a



Gary Steppe

rare few exceptions, dominated the region along with Towns County Schools in CRCT testing results.

In reading, Union students placed first in third, fourth and fifth grades,

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## Gainesville man leads chase through Union

By Charles Duncan  
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James Tyler Casey Reece is in a whole lot of trouble.

The 39-year-old Gainesville man allegedly led authorities in Cherokee County, NC, Union County sheriff's deputies, Blairsville Police, Georgia State Patrol and White County sheriff's deputies on a wild chase that had him clocked at 107 mph in a 55 mph zone in Union County.

The chase began in North Carolina where deputies chased Reece to the intersection of Highway 64 and U.S. 129. North Carolina authorities tried to ticket him for

speeding. He ignored them, authorities said.

He turned his BMW toward Union County, North Carolina authorities continued their pursuit to the Georgia line, where Union County sheriff's Lt. Chad Deyton picked up the chase, Union County Sheriff Scott Stephens said.

"Lt. Deyton pursued while other Union County deputies tried to block his path," Sheriff Stephens said.

Reece ran several other drivers off the road, sometimes almost hitting them head on, Lt. Deyton said.

"When he got to Pat Haralson Drive, he warped it onto that road," Lt. Deyton

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Lt. Chad Deyton talks about the chase with other authorities.

## Veterans seek new name for School Street from city

By Charles Duncan  
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A local veterans group is seeking to change the name of School Street to Veterans Memorial Drive.

Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley said that Alvin Dyer and Charlie Hunter, representing the Veterans, made



Mayor Jim Conley

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## Chamber unveils buy local campaign

By Tobie Chandler  
Special to NGN

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce's Second Annual State of the Community Address was a well attended, informative, and enjoyable luncheon.

Sponsored by Victoria's Center, each attendee was given an information packet about the companies located within Victoria's Center and an overview of some of the products offered within the shopping center.

The most delicious portion of the entire meeting was an out of this world coffee pound cake each guest enjoyed provided by the Ugly

Mug Café.

The program began with an invocation from Pastor Fred Lodge of the First Baptist Church of Blairsville.

Immediately following, the President of the North East Georgia Board of Realtors got up to speak about the current state of real estate.

Carol Hayes, having just returned home from a 23,000-strong Realtor Rally promoting home ownership in Washington D.C., filled the crowd in on the current state of the Flood Bill, the status of Fannie Mae and

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Blairsville-Union Chamber members gathered at Victoria's Center to hear the State of the Community address last week.

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6th Annual Mountain  
Fling Arts & Crafts Show  
Saturday, June 30, 2012  
From 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, July 1, 2012  
From 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Suches:  
Wed., July 4  
Community  
Gathering  
at 7 p.m.  
Fireworks at  
Dark

Blairsville:  
Wed., July 4  
Meeks Park  
Fireworks  
at dark or  
approximately  
9:30 p.m.