

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Judge Miller denies bail for Ledford and Stokes

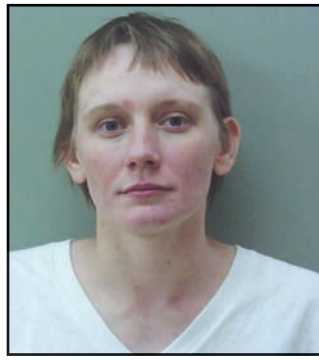
By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Hiawassee – Enotah Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley argued that Ledford was a flight risk, having been on the lam from law enforcement on various charges that include deposit account fraud, forgery and criminal trespass.

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Rebecca Ann Stokes



Brittany Ledford

Brittany Ledford, represented by Public Defender Charlie Brown, was arrested at Stokes' home, after a consent search in July granted to Towns County Sheriff's Deputy Brandon Barrett by Stokes.

Brittany Ledford later with Ledford malice murder, felony murder, aggravated assault, unlawful removal of a body from a crime scene,

and tampering with evidence following her arrest in July on unrelated charges at Stokes' residence.

Langley urged Judge Miller to deny bail.

"She was found hiding in a bedroom underneath a pile of clothing," Langley told the court. "Is she a flight risk? I think so."

Bond denied, Judge Miller said.

Enter Stokes, represented by former Enotah Circuit District Attorney David Turk.

Stokes' father and husband testified on her behalf that she was not a flight risk if granted bail by Judge Miller.

Langley read the warrants against Stokes, malice murder, felony murder, unlawful removal of a body from a crime scene, tampering with evidence, and terroristic threats.

He urged Judge Miller to deny bail citing that key pieces of evidence are still missing from the investigation.

Turk argued that there was no evidence that Stokes was a flight risk.

"She has exhibited no criminal behavior prior to these events," Turk told Judge Miller. "She's a housewife."

See Denied, 2A

Union County Schools welcome new principals

By Heather Poole
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Union County High School Principal John Hill is excited to be surrounded by new faces.

He will be seeing plenty of those, since all of the Union County principals, including himself, are new with the exception of Union County Elementary School Principal Patricia Cook.

As students headed back to the classroom on Tuesday, Hill talked excitedly about the veteran, and younger teachers that have been added to an already impressive staff that he said is dedicated to the students.

Hill has received much support in his new position, and gratefully said, "The former principal did a wonderful



John Hill

job, and he has helped me so much with the transition." Along with new faculty members, Union County Schools can also look forward to new career-based programs, and Apply to College Night. The faculty will help students apply to colleges of their choice in

See Back to School, 2A

Mayor Conley seeks third term

By Charles Duncan
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editor@nganews.com

The name Jim Conley and the city of Blairsville are synonymous.

Conley, the city's ever so active mayor, will seek reelection in November.

Conley announced on Friday that he will toss his hat back into the ring during the Aug. 26-28 qualifying period for City elections.

"I'm proud to say that as of this day, I am announcing my candidacy for reelection as the mayor of the city of Blairsville," Mayor Conley said. "Over the past eight years, we've made a lot of progress, made a lot of improvements, and completed a lot of city projects. We've got projects in the works. We've still got a lot of work to complete to improve the quality of life in the city of Blairsville."

"I feel like that I have given my city, my community, and the county as a whole, good representation," Mayor Conley said. "As mayor, I've tried to treat everybody fairly, honestly, and do the best thing for the city of Blairsville."

"I want to thank the people who have supported me in my previous two terms



Mayor Jim Conley

as the mayor of Blairsville," Mayor Conley said. "Without their votes and show of support, I would never have been mayor."

"I want to ask for their continued support in the upcoming election to be held Nov. 5th," Mayor Conley said. "I have been proud to serve the city of Blairsville and its residents for eight years as mayor. I ask for the support of the city's residents to complete some unfinished projects that the city so desperately needs."

During his tenure as mayor, Conley and the Blairsville City Council have com-

pleted an unprecedented package of projects related to water and sewer. Since 2008, more than \$9 million in upgrades have been completed using low interest loans, grant dollars and less than \$750,000 in city funds.

The tell all tale of a city's ability to attract business, sewer capacity, has been increased from 400,000 gallons of treatment capacity per day to 1 million gallons of sewer capacity per day.

"And the city is proud to say that through the use of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax shared with the county, there is a new City Hall," Mayor Conley said. "And, there is still SPLOST money available that can be used to improve City Hall."

Also, the city has just completed the grading and paving of the land to be used for the construction of a new North Terminal at the Blairsville Municipal Airport, thus, further enhancing the city's economic development attraction.

Mayor Conley said that some of the biggest accomplishments during his tenure include water and sewer improvements, manhole rehabilitation projects, replacement of

See Mayor, 2A

Streetscape to conclude by Oct. 1st

By Charles Duncan
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Mayor Jim Conley envisions Streetscape as a way to slow traffic in Downtown, creating a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere to generate more customers for Downtown businesses.

He's proud to announce that the city construction project will be complete by Oct. 1st.

It couldn't come any quicker for Mayor Conley, who has fielded countless questions, complaints, and concerns about the Downtown project.

Business owners have been quite upset, workers at Downtown businesses have complained about getting to and from work because of the traffic congestion and construction.

Mayor Conley agrees there have been holdups, work



Scenes like these have made for some unhappy campers in Downtown Blairsville. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

order changes and delays. Also, an unseasonable amount of rainfall has put the project off target.

"Hopefully, that's all

behind us," Mayor Conley said. "I'm telling you, when Streetscape is completed, all

See Street, 3A

Quilts of Valor program going nationwide



(L-R): Patrick Carlisle, Patricia Neigh, Young Harris; Keith Evans, Blairsville; Jim Hoyt, Hiawassee; Brandy Creel, Young Harris; Frank Norton, Murphy, NC; Tom Wright, Hiawassee; Peter Leaming, Blue Ridge, GA; Jemmya Benfield, Blairsville; Thomas Harold, Hiawassee; Richard Campbell, Young Harris; Alejandro Dezayas, Blairsville. Not pictured: Ronald Browning, Young Harris; William, Ellis; Jack McCorkle, Morganton; Mike Desfosses, Russ King, Roland Oakes, of Hiawassee; Timothy Jordan, Copperhill, TN; William Reeves, Blairsville. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

By Heather Poole
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Home is defined as pertaining to or being connected with one's home or country.

The ladies with the Misty Mountain Quilters' Guild consistently take that definition to heart, as a room full of veterans witnessed at the Union County Public Library last week in Blairsville.

According to the quilter's pamphlet, a "Quilt of Valor" or QOV, is a wartime quilt made to honor our war wounded.

It is a thank you that goes beyond words, as it provides a piece of home, even if a soldier cannot be physically

near his/her family. The mission of the QOV Foundation is to cover all veterans touched by war with a Quilt of Valor.

Sandy Craft, the coordinator for the event, predicted what would happen at the beginning of the ceremony saying, "If this is your first time, be warned: there will not be a dry eye in this place."

She was right. After Dr. Bradley Goeltz, finished his presentation of Signs of Summer Stress, the quilters took to the stage to present 20 veterans with beautiful handmade quilts.

The ladies made every aspect of the recipient's experience special. Rather than handing a folded quilt to the

brave men and women, they draped the quilt around their shoulders, kissed the veteran on the cheek, thanked them, and presented them with a personal note within a coordinating pillowcase.

Veterans from Vietnam, Korea, WWII, and Desert Storm, 11 Army, 6 Air Force, 2 Marines, and 1 Navy were present in a room that had a tangible pulse of courage.

Catered by Crane Creek Vineyards in Young Harris, the veterans were able to fill their bellies while the quilters warmed their hearts.

Sandy Leake, associate director of nursing services for the entire region with the Veterans Administration, was

See Quilts, 3A

Awake America rings home in Blairsville

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Aug. 1st was the first Thursday of the month, which means the Blairsville City Hall hosted its Awake America for Union County and the surrounding counties.

After skipping the month of July because Independence Day fell on Thursday, City Hall was once again packed as four counties and two States were represented.

Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley and Police Chief Johnny Carroll were in attendance for the monthly event that begins at 11:59 a.m.

"It's really encouraging to hear that our prayers are being answered," said World Harvest Church's Lydia Long. "The fact that people are here



City leaders and residents from two states prayed for our nation last week at City Hall. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

today means a revival is here. We bring different churches and different backgrounds together."

"Jonathan Hood opened the meeting with a prayer for

the nation, the community, the churches, and families. Alexis Dillworth led the Pledge of Allegiance and Pastor Shep

See Awake, 3A

New addition to Historic Downtown



General Manager Eric Sebring proudly displays the mural on Builder's First Source's windows in Downtown painted by Renee Passmore Rockwood. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

If you've driven past Builder's First Source in the evening, you may have noticed spotlights and someone paint-

See Mural, 6A

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Aug 31st-Sept 1st
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
at the Mountain Life Museum
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August 15th at 5:30 p.m.
at the **Woody Gap School**
Woody Gap Back to School Bash!
See page 15A

TAX-FREE SHOPPING
Georgia's Tax Free Weekend
August 9th-10th
See page 6A

Lady Panther Softball
Aug 9-10 Ianier Point Invitational @ Gainesville
Monday, Aug 12th vs. Fannin Co. 6 p.m.