

Sales Tax Holiday Friday and Saturday

Georgia will have a tax-free holiday weekend this year for just the second time since 2009.

Union County students returned to the classroom on Tuesday, possibly a little too late as parents have already spent their hard-earned dollars on back to school clothing and

supplies.

This year's tax holiday will begin at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 9th, and will end at midnight on Saturday, Aug. 10th.

During the holiday, shoppers can avoid paying the state tax on clothing and footwear items with a sales

price of \$100 or less per item; a single purchase, with a sales price of \$1,000 or less, on personal computers and personal computer-related accessories; and general school supplies to be used in the classroom or in classroom-related activities with a sales price of \$20 or less per item.

The exemption does not apply to the following items: clothing accessories, jewelry, handbags, umbrellas, eyewear, watches, watchbands, cellular devices, furniture, or computer-related accessories designed for recreational use.

Mural...from Page 1A

ing the windows.

The artist is Renee Rockwood and all of her months of hard work have paid off as she has captured a piece of Union County history in her mural on the window of the Blairsville business.

The project actually came about as a result of Italian food and an unexpected meeting between Rockwood and Builder's First Source's General Manager Eric Sebring.

Back in the spring, Sebring went to pick up a pizza where he noticed Rockwood's talents when she was painting a mural at another local business.

"I met her picking up a pizza and she was painting the

windows there," Sebring said. "So I struck up a conversation with her and I told her that I thought the work she was doing at the pizza place was really nice.

"I asked her if she would be interested in coming over here and doing a historical mural on our window," he said. "She obliged and we got it done."

The project spanned the better part of the summer months, doing most of her work after dark, but Sebring agrees that the end result was well worth the wait.

"It took her a few months to do it," Sebring said. "There was a lot of tedious work, paint-wise.

"There was a lot of detail that had to go into it but I think the end result speaks for itself because it turned out fantastic," he said. "She would do most of the work in the evening to not interfere with our business during the day. She spent a lot of long hours at night with flood lights so she could work.

"It took her about three months to complete and again," he said. "It just turned out fantastic."

According to Sebring, his goal was to capture a piece of Union County history and show the community how grateful they are to the city of Blairsville and all of its residents.

"We wanted to show

the community the history of Union County and we're proud to be a part of the downtown area," Sebring said. "She did a fantastic job for us. It took a lot of time because she had to gather old photographs of the historical landmarks in Union County.

"We thought it would be something nice to have painted on those windows to show the community that we want to be a part of the community and that we care about the history of Union County," he said. "And we want to invite everyone to come and look at it and to share a part of our history that is very close to a lot of people's hearts."

CruizIn will make cash registers ring often

By Heather Poole
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The fifth year of the Georgia Moonshine CruizIn at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds is sure to provide an economic boost for Towns County and surrounding communities.

The event is expected to bring in an estimated \$1 million into Towns County alone.

"It's always a huge economic event for the community, especially local hotels and resorts, locally owned shops, the campground at the Fairgrounds, and of course gas sta-

tions," said Hilda Thomason, general manager of the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

It all kicks off on Thursday with the Haulin' Mash Moonshine Bash at the Ridges Resort & Marina.

The welcome party at The Ridges, is open to the public, start up time, 5:30 p.m.

The party also features some of the Classic Cars that make up the Moonshine CruizIn.

This year's event has lots of excitement. On Friday at 9 a.m., meet the cast of the Speed Channel's RU Faster Than A Redneck right next to ET Motorgear Event Apparel trailer.



The Georgia Moonshine CruizIn should be fun for all ages.

An hour later, rev up for the grand opening of the event.

At 11 a.m., the Lacy Snider Show cranks up live music at the Music Hauler stage behind the school house at the Frontier Village event site.

At 6:15 p.m., don't forget the Parade from Downtown to the Boot Leg Boogie Party at Lake Chatuge Lodge next to the Fairgrounds. That's when they start lining up. Parking for the Boot Leg Boogie following the parade is at the Fairgrounds, just follow the signs.

Overall, the CruizIn doesn't just help the Fairgrounds and local shops, it also aids the local hotels.

"The Ridges Resort and the local condos are almost always full during this event," Thomason added.

Kim Farmer, general manager of the Holiday Inn Express in Hiawassee, is certainly benefitting from the turnout.

"It's a great boost for business," Farmer said. "We sold out every night with the exception of one."

This was a welcome surprise, as Farmer added, "Week nights are very rare to completely sell out."

Chad Hooper, general manager at The Ridges, has also benefitting from the event, along with the Bass Fishing Tournament just a few days prior to the CruizIn.

While the estimated financial figures look promising, Rakes Parrish, coordinator of the CruizIn, and Thomason, want to know for sure.

"This year, there will be a survey taken to figure out the income bracket of the car owners, as well as where they're staying," Thomason said.

That survey may not be an easy one to take. After all, Parrish and Thomason are expecting 1,000 cars, and at least 10,000 patrons.

To put that into perspective, the population of Towns County in 2011 was 10,611.

If the turnout for the Georgia Mountain Fair was any indication of what can be expected, that huge number may be spot on.

"This year's Fair was better attended than recent years," Thomason boasted.

Locally-owned restaurants also felt the inflation of

people.

Lisa Collins, owner of Michalee's Chocolate Café in Hiawassee said her restaurant absolutely benefitted from the Fair.

"This was the best Fair week we have had in the seven years we have been in business," Collins said. "The car show always brings a good crowd too."

With the economy in the shape it is in, smaller communities like Towns can sometimes have a harder time recovering.

In order to continue bringing in tourists who help support so many local businesses, the Fairgrounds has big plans in the works.

Thomason has put offers in on the Greg Allman Band, and even Merle Haggard.

While nothing has yet been confirmed, Thomason is hopeful it will all pan out.

The car show has plenty to offer to locals, too, including classic hot rod cars, trucks, and bikes.

There also will be a craft exhibit, a working moonshine still, and \$5,000 worth of cash prizes to be won.

The show also features visitors from around the globe.

A gentleman from Germany is making the trek to Towns County to show his car, and an individual from Nova Scotia will be there as well.

The event runs Aug. 8th, 9th, and 10th. The parade of Classics on Friday begins at 7 p.m.

It features all the classic hotrods and cars making the trip to Towns County.

Also on the list of upcoming events at the Fairgrounds is the Fall Festival, a local favorite that occurs Oct. 11-19.

The event promises live music, Arts and Crafts vendors, a flower show, and the Georgia Official State Fiddlers' Convention.

Along with all of the excitement, Speed Channel's RU Faster Than A Redneck wants to feature Hiawassee on their show hosted by comedian Jon Reep.

The show promises the winner \$10,000, and Thomason cannot wait to show them around the county. The show will be around for the CruizIn, and may even find a few drivers to recruit.

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