

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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## Knight and Co. collect \$2.28 million in back taxes

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
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True to his campaign Commissioner Lee Knight and his staff have collected more than \$2.28 million in delinquent taxes since January.

Knight and his staff have worked diligently on delinquent tax collections, including collections of \$712,031 since late April, the commissioner said.

Three of the main sources of property tax are real property, which is land and structures, mobile home and Recreational Vehicles, either on someone else's property or their own property, and personal property, such as airplanes, boats, store merchandise inventory and equipment, grading equipment or machinery used in a business.

"We have asked all cus-



Lee Knight

tomers with delinquent taxes past due from 2010 and back to come in and catch them up," Commissioner Knight said. "Since April 24th, when we ran an advertisement to address the delinquent taxes, we have collected a total of \$712,031 of which \$90,300 is interest."

Of the interest alone, the Union County School System received \$59,323 and the county received \$29,650, while the state received \$1,320.

The total amount of delinquent taxes collected since Jan. 2nd, is \$2,283,300 and the interest included in that amount was \$161,062.

"We still have \$1,969,594.02 left on the books to collect," Commissioner Knight said. "We have compiled a list for collections starting with taxpayers who owe 2010 and older. We are going through the collection process on all 2010 and back taxes and will file Fi Fa's to start the levy process."

"Union County has less than 2 percent delinquent taxes for 2006 through 2010 on real property," he said. "The property owners that have not come forward and paid or made a payment plan to bring their taxes current will be on

that list." Additional collection fees will be added to the delinquent tax bills going to collections, Commissioner Knight said.

The commissioner will contract with an outside tax collection service to collect the delinquent taxes and fees.

The outside service company will not get paid the additional collection fees until the county receives the delinquent tax.

Those not paid will go up for tax lien sale later this year or early next year in 2014.

"While we all hate having to pay property taxes, we must all pay our property tax or it's not fair to the ones that do," Commissioner Knight said.

Union County Tax Assessors are still working on the Tax Digest for the 2013 bills. See *Taxes, 2A*

## Called Commission meeting scheduled for Thursday

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
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Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris will hold a special called meeting on Thursday, Aug. 29th, at the Union County Courthouse in the Jury Assembly Room to call for the adoption of an extension of the 1-cent Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax.

The referendum will go before voters on Nov. 5th.

The six-year run of SPLOST III comes to a close in March 2015.

The county is looking to extend the 1-cent sales tax for six years with an affirmative vote in November. Confirmations, if approved by voters, would begin in April 2015.

The early ballot for SPLOST IV allows time to put the measure back on the



Commissioner Lamar Paris ballot in two years if there is a negative vote with only minimal lapse in sales tax collections.

Commissioner Paris said a series of public hearings will be held to help choose the projects list and prioritize when they will be completed.

The projected dollar amount for SPLOST IV is See *SPLOST, 3A*

## Remembering the "Rooster"

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Brasstown, NC – Kenny Henson will never be forgotten.

Kenny's life was cut tragically short by a Sept. 11th, 2010 auto accident in Gilmer County.

Last weekend, Kenny was honored at the 9th Annual Scott Hogged Memorial Youth Conservation and Education Day at Fred Cook's Farm in Brasstown, NC.

Each year, Scott Hogged Day honors a young person no longer with us that loved the outdoors, and this year, it was Kenny Henson.

Hogged was a 10th grader at Hayesville High School in 1984, when he passed away in an auto accident returning from a camping trip.

Thanks to loving families and friends, Scott and Kenny will continue to live on in the hearts and minds of everyone who knew them.

And thanks to Scott Hogged Day, those unfamiliar with these two energetic young men, were able to see first hand what they meant not only to family, but to their friends and community.

Kenny was chosen due



Kenny "Rooster" Henson was remembered Saturday at Fred Cook's Farm in Brasstown, NC. Photo/Todd Forrest

to a shopping trip to Hoggeds Sporting Goods in May on the two-year anniversary of Kenny's passing.

While in the store, Kenny's younger sister Morgan, made the comment to Helen Hogged, Scott's mother, on the significance of the day's date.

It wasn't until six months later, that they got a call from Sam Hogged, to inform the

family that Kenny would be honored in August.

"We were shopping at the Hoggeds store last year and Helen Hogged, just happened to be running the register and we started talking to her and Morgan, just told her, 'today is the day my bubba (brother) died.' Collins said. "And Mrs. Hogged, who had already gone See *Rooster, 2A*

## JDA approves Young Harris College bonds

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

The Sole Commissioners from Union and Towns counties say the recent approval of tax-exempt bonds for financing Young Harris College's residential hall, The Towers, by the Joint Development Authority of Fannin, Towns and Union counties, was an easy decision.

Commissioners Lamar Paris and Bill Kendall both say that the college is an economic development driver throughout the region.

"It was really a no-brainer," Commissioner Kendall said. "The counties involved said no liabilities whatsoever, and the new residential hall will more than pay for itself.



The Towers at Young Harris College. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Young Harris College is a big part of Towns County, and the region for that matter.

"The taxpayers of Fannin, Union and Towns counties are not responsible for this

bond venture," Commissioner Kendall said. "It's just a formality to go through the Joint Development Authority and See *The Towers, 2A*

## Labor Day fireworks scheduled at Meeks Park

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

With a little help from Mother Nature, there will be a fireworks show on Saturday night at Meeks Park.

Actually, Mother Nature is the reason the fireworks will now be celebrated Labor Day Weekend, instead of on the Fourth of July.

Torrential downpours in early July prompted the rescheduling of fireworks to Aug. 31st, Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce President Cindy Wil-

See *Fireworks, 3A*



Locals hope the Saturday night sky will look like this. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

## Heritage Festival on Saturday and Sunday

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

History comes to life in Downtown Blairsville on Labor Day Weekend.

For the 12th consecutive year, the Mountain Heritage Festival takes shape on Aug. 31st and Sept. 1st.

It's all about the traditions of the North Georgia Mountains. The event is held at the Mountain Life Museum, in Blairsville, one block South of the Historic Union County Courthouse.

The event, part of the Union County Historical Society, features life like it used to be, featuring farm animals,



Farm animals are just part of the Heritage Festival experience.

craft exhibits, blacksmithing, bowl turning, quilting and many other facets of early life of local settlers.

The Heritage Festival helps tell the story of life in this rugged land more than a

century ago, giving visitors a glimpse of the inventive, hard-working, and self-sufficient mountain people who settled this God-fearing Christian

See *Fest, 6A*

## Kemp the guest at Eggs & Issues

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Secretary of State Brian Kemp was the guest of honor at last week's Eggs and Issues at the Union County Community Center.

Secretary Kemp, a lifelong resident of Athens, touched on several issues during his 30-minute chat with the residents of Union County.

Kemp spoke about changes to election dates, the economy, and corporation registrations.

"We had a tough time last year," Kemp said. "For those that tried to register a corporation, I know it was a difficult process, and I apologize for that. We had to move our system to a new platform. "I know one person liked the old system, but we were told that our system was running too slow, and we had times where the system actually crashed for three or four days, right before the renewal deadline," Kemp said. "Basically we were told that we needed



Secretary of State Brian Kemp

See *Kemp, 6A*

## Panthers-Indians; need we say more?

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The lights come on Friday at 7:30 p.m.

The Towns County Indians invade Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium to face the Panthers in the 29th meeting between the two rivals.

Union County will be looking to improve to 28-1 all-time against the Indians, while Towns County's new

Head Coach Blair Harrison will try and become the only football coach in school history to have a winning record against the Panthers.

The last meeting at Frank McClure Stadium in Hiwassee saw Union take a 17-0 lead at the break, but turnovers kept the Panthers out of the end zone in the second half and allowed the Indians to creep back into the contest



See *Rivalry, 6A*

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**Arts & Crafts**

**Celebrate Autumn Arts & Crafts Show**  
Sept. 21-22, 2013

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**UNION COUNTY NURSING HOME FALL CRUISE-IN**  
SEPTEMBER 8TH

Make plans to bring your vehicles out and let the residents enjoy. They have a good time and you will too!

September 8th from 2-4 p.m.  
Rain date Sept. 15th. For more information call 706-994-0251.

**AWAKE AMERICA MINISTRIES**

**Awake America gathering**  
Sept. 5th at 11:59 a.m. at Blairsville City Hall

**FOOTBALL:**  
Fri. Aug 30th vs. Towns County  
7:30 p.m.  
Middle School Football

Thurs. Aug 29th @ North Habersham 5:30 p.m.

**Softball**  
Tues. Aug 27th vs. Jefferson 6:45 p.m.  
Wed. Aug 28th @ Fannin Co. 6 p.m.  
Thurs. Aug 29th vs. Greene Co.  
DOUBLEHEADER 4 p.m. & 6 p.m.