

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Awake America kicks off 9/11 remembrance

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer



Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley prays for our nation during last week's Awake America prayer session. Photo/Todd Forrest

Wednesday marks the 12th anniversary of the terrorist attacks in New York City, Washington, DC and a field in Stoneycreek Township in Pennsylvania. Remembrance services are scheduled locally at Pine Top Baptist Church, and House of Prayer. Pine Top will be open all day beginning at 8:45 a.m. on Sept. 11 and includes a 7 p.m. Day of Prayer service. House of Prayer will be open from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m., also on Sept. 11th.

Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley and Awake America participants opened the doors of City Hall again last week for the monthly Awake America Community Prayer Meeting and reminded locals to pray for our nation.

Pastor Jonathan Hood, Kennetha Alexander, Mark Alexander, Col. George Pletcher, Dale Shaffer, Lydia Plog, and Conley were among those who spoke, led prayer, or the Pledge of Allegiance. The Rev. Hood opened the meeting with a welcome

and the Invocation, giving thanks for the opportunity to gather and pray for their community, the nation, family, friends, and neighbors.

"We stand in a time where there is a need of great repentance, on behalf of this nation, on behalf of its leaders,

and behalf of each one of us as we acknowledge our sins, and we are thankful that we serve a merciful and gracious God," the Rev. Hood prayed, with eyes closed and head bowed.

Following the Rev. See *Awake*, 2A

City to host Cordele Housing Authority on Oct. 1st

By Charles Duncan
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Mayor Jim Conley

A public hearing is scheduled for 5 p.m., Oct. 1st, in the conference room at Blairsville City Hall for the purpose of unveiling the financing plan of the Housing Authority of Cordele for Tan Yard Branch Apartments upgrades.

The bond amount is \$40 million and will be lent to Cordele Heritage Oaks, LP, and its affiliates to be used for the purpose of providing funds to make certain improvements to Heritage Oaks properties.

Last week, the Blairsville City Council approved allowing the Housing Authority of Cordele to hold a public hearing at City Hall. The hearing is scheduled for 5 p.m.

Persons interested in expressing their views on the

encouraged to attend the public hearing.

Interested persons not able to attend the public hearing, can submit written comments to Blairsville City

See *Hearing*, 3A

SPLOST projects set for ballot

By Charles Duncan
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Lamar Paris

The official list of projects to be advertised for the Nov. 5th referendum calling for an extension of the current Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax is completed.

The referendum will ask voters to support a \$19 million SPLOST.

Union County Government and the City of Blairsville reached an intergovernmental agreement last month that will divide the proposed SPLOST proceeds beginning in 2015.

Union County will receive \$17.5 million and the city will receive \$1.5 million, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris announced at a called County Commission meeting at the Union County Courthouse.

Commissioner Paris said that he met with Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley in late July and easily reached an intergovernmental agreement.

Commissioner Paris approved calling for an election on Nov. 5th, for the purpose of asking Union County voters to approve or disapprove the question of whether a SPLOST shall be adopted for 24 quarters, or six years, beginning on April

1st, 2015 to raise an estimated \$19 million to be used to fund special projects, according to the agreement.

The city will receive 7.89 percent of the total collections from SPLOST IV, according to the agreement.

Also, according to the agreement, if the project revenues exceed the amount called for in the referendum, the county may use those funds to complete any other county project.

Likewise, if the proposed city projects, come in under cost, the city may use those funds for other projects or purpose, according to the agreement.

The county is respon-

sible for the cost of the election, according to the agreement.

The proposed projects for the county include approximately \$5 million to pay off the bond debt of the Union County Community Center, \$3.4 million for parks and recreation upgrades and improvements, solid waste upgrades and improvements, library upgrades and improvements, roads, streets and bridges, and economic development facilities and land acquisition, according to the agreement.

The city of Blairsville's proposed projects include water and sewer improvements, public safety equipment and vehicles, public works vehicles, equipment, roads, and sidewalks, according to the agreement.

Early voting will take place prior to the Nov. 5th General Election.

On a separate ballot, city voters must cast ballots in the city's mayoral race.

Mayor Jim Conley is seeking a third term as the city's mayor.

He is opposed by political newcomer Tom Payton.

City voters will cast ballots for mayor at City Hall. They will cast ballots for SPLOST at their County voting precinct.

Voting polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Nov. 5th, or the day of the elections.

Pine Top Church Homecoming

By Charles Duncan
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The Pine Top School Reunion brought back Louise Saxon Hopkins, Wayne Dyer, Sylvia Dyer Turnage, Dorothy Dyer, Joan Dyer Akins, Tom Townsend, Obie England Dyer, Russell Dyer, and Alvin Dyer. Not pictured are Cret Dyer, and Lavada Hood. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Pine Top Baptist Church held its annual Homecoming on Sunday, and the event marked another historic celebration, the 60th anniversary of the closing of Pine Top School.

"We had a lot of fun and the place was packed," the Rev. Jimmy Tanner said. "And the last time the Pine Top School had a reunion was about 10 years ago. I asked some of those folks if they'd like to hold another reunion of sorts. And, it was impressive, 11 folks turned out."

Among those Pine Top School students who attended on Sunday were, Louise Sax-

on Hopkins, Sylvia Dyer Turnage, Dorothy Dyer, Joan Dyer Akins, Tom Townsend, Obie England Dyer, Russell Dyer, Alvin Dyer, Cret Dyer, Wayne Dyer, and Lavada Hood.

See *Pine Top*, 3A

Ledford, Stokes indicted for murder

By Charles Duncan
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Rebecca Stokes

Brittany Ledford

Hiawassee - A Towns County Grand Jury has handed up a 13-count indictment against the two Hiawassee women accused of murdering 53-year-old Diane "Dee Dee" Adams-Donaldson on June 17th.

Brittany Elizabeth Ledford, 21, and her reported 32-year-old lover, Rebecca Ann Stokes, have been charged with felony murder, malice murder, two counts each aggravated assault, tampering with evidence, and removal of a body from the scene of death, according to the indictment handed up last week in Towns County Superior Court.

Stokes also has been accused of terrorist threats

for pointing a gun at Adams-Donaldson and firing it in her direction, the indictment shows.

The murder, according to arrest warrants, occurred on June 17th at 500 Hickory Lane.

Adams-Donaldson's body was loaded in a wheel barrow and rolled to a home

that had not been occupied since 1973, according to testimony during an Aug. 4th bond hearing for the two women.

Adams-Donaldson's body was dumped in an abandoned well on the property, where it was recovered on July 11th, according to investiga-

See *Indict*, 2A

Alexander's celebrates 60 years



Hoyt and Ruby Alexander family celebrate another family gathering with grandson Paul, youngest son Eddy, and his wife Sandy. Alexander's Store celebrates 60 years on Saturday.

By Charles Duncan
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Hoyt and Ruby Alexander shared a vision.

A 50,000 square-foot store on Town Creek Road is the fruit of their labors.

Hoyt was the consummate salesman, learning his trade early in life.

During his days working to help build Crater Lake National Park, in Oregon, with the Civilian Conservation Corps, Hoyt often times made extra

money selling cigarettes and other items to his campmates between pay days.

He brought that salesmanship back home with him to Union County and worked as a farmer for many years.

In the early 1950s, Hoyt and Ruby decided to open a country store, catering to farmers and their families.

Hoyt was the salesman, Ruby was the business manager, or as their youngest son Eddy puts it, "the bean counter."

Together, they founded a store on a lonely dirt road called Town Creek Road.

For years, Hoyt lobbied local and state officials to pave the roadway, understanding that one day, it would be home to hundreds.

As usual, Hoyt's vision of his community came to fruition.

In the beginning, Alexander's sold farm supplies, hardware, brogans, overalls,

See *Celebrate*, 6A

UCSO Narcotics Division stays busy

By Charles Duncan
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Sheriff Mack Mason

Five people remain behind bars today following successive 4th Amendment searches related to drug activity, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

The arrests took place last week. First, Sheriff Mason said that Royce Futch and Janie Nicholas were searched due to recent drug activity intercepted by the county's Narcotics Division.

Following the search, deputies confiscated a quantity of methamphetamine along with \$7,300 in cash.

Both were charged with possession of methamphetamine, Sheriff Mason said.

Likewise, Marsha Woodham, and Jason Cunningham were caught up in a 4th amendment search due to suspected drug activity intercepted by the Narcotics Division, Sheriff Mason said.

Woodham was charged with possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute, possession of marijuana, and crossing a guardline with contraband.

"She had methamphetamine on her person when she crossed the guardline," Sheriff Mason said.

Cunningham was charged with possession of

methamphetamine and possession of marijuana.

"Mr. Cunningham was just lucky enough to be with Ms. Woodham at the time of our arrival," Sheriff Mason said.

The charges against Woodham have led to the Sheriff's Office actions of filing seizure papers on her home on Buttons Lane, Sheriff Mason said.

A cache of distribution of marijuana led to the search of Justin Charles Brown's home, Sheriff Mason said.

"A search of the home yielded marijuana plants inside the residence," Sheriff Mason said.

In addition to the distribution charge, Brown was charged with manufacturing marijuana, and possession of a controlled substance, Sheriff Mason said.

"We also seized \$900 in cash," he said.

All five were in jail at press time.

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