

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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September 25, 2013

Townsend to build distillery in Union County

By Charles Duncan
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Tommy Townsend had heard all the rumors about a possible Granddaddy Mimm distillery in Union County.

He can officially separate fact from fiction following Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris' decision last week to amend the county alcohol ordinance to allow for the construction of distilleries.

The answer to the question "will there be a Granddaddy Mimm distillery in Union County?"

"Yes," Townsend said proudly. "We're now at the point where we can begin the planning phase of that facility."

Prior to Commissioner Paris' decision last week, there were rumors that Townsend and a business partner were going to buy the now defunct



Blairsville native Tommy Townsend will build the state's second agritourism distillery. He'll build it in the Owltown community. Photo/Charles Duncan

Goose Creek property on the Gainesville Highway.

Townsend said a deal had been in the works.

"We just never came to terms with the folks involved

with the Goose Creek property," Townsend said.

Yes, Townsend will build a Granddaddy Mimm distillery in Union County.

The most likely location is the

family farm in Owltown.

He'll have two licenses, one to produce distilled spirits from fruit, the other to produce distilled spirits from other agricultural products, most likely corn.

"That's actually the perfect location," Townsend said. "I think a working farm will greatly enhance the Granddaddy Mimm distillery."

"Agritourism is one of the fastest growing businesses in the South," Townsend said. "This is an opportunity to come back home, maybe create a few jobs, and give back to the place I grew up in."

"I've lived away from Blairsville, Georgia for a number of years, mainly because the Country Music business is in Nashville, Tenn.," Townsend said. "This is an opportunity to make

See *Granddaddy*, 2A

Combined millage rate to fall; BOE stays the course in 2013

By Charles Duncan
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Chairman Gary Davenport and the Union County Board of Education will keep the millage rate at 11.798 mills for 2013 property tax purposes following a decision during last week's called BOE meeting.

The BOE actually will take in \$5,444 less than a year ago, according to the BOE's Five-Year Tax History to be advertised this week in the *North Georgia News*.

Last week, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris proposed a slight break in the county's millage rate from 5.410 mills to 5.408 mills, according to the county's Five-Year Tax History, advertised in the *North Georgia News*.

"It's a feat not to raise taxes and continue to provide



Gary Davenport

the services that we're providing," Paris said, adding that the county won't set its budget until the end of 2013.

"I'm proud that we're able to maintain our budget and millage rate with a slight decrease," he said at last week's County Commission meeting. "The only way we're

See *Millage*, 2A

Run Above the Clouds on Oct. 5th

By Charles Duncan
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Suches - The runners come from near and far to take part in one of the most unique 10K runs anywhere.

At 2,900 feet above sea level, the Run Above the Clouds is believed to be the highest altitude race in the state.

It's also an important part of the financial equation for Woody Gap Schools.

The 14th Run Above the Clouds is scheduled for 9 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 5th in Suches.

The foot race is run simultaneously with the Indian Summer Festival, scheduled for Saturday and Sunday,



The Run Above the Clouds in Suches is a grueling 10K. Possibly, the most grueling 10K in the Southeast. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Oct. 5th and 6th, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Both events support

programs and students at the Woody Gap School, the small-

See *Clouds*, 3A

BRMEMC remembers Jack Lance

By Charles Duncan
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Hiawassee - The celebration of Blue Ridge Mountain EMC's 75th anniversary was a somber one.

The nine-member Board of Directors paid tribute Saturday to the late Jack Lance, who served on the board at the time of his death in March.

More than 300 EMC members attended the annual meeting, which included the Lance tribute, and a breakdown of the annual report by BRMEMC General Manager Matthew Akins.

Akins commended Lance for his years of dedication serving the membership as a representative for Union



BRMEMC GM Matthew Akins pays tribute to Jack Lance Sr. on Saturday during the EMC's 75th Annual Meeting. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

He presented a framed proclamation from the Board of Directors to the Lance chil-

See *BRMEMC*, 3A

He then delivered the State of the BRMEMC address to

See *BRMEMC*, 3A

President appoints Powell to Energy Board

By Charles Duncan
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President Barack Obama announced his intent last week to appoint Jim Powell, of Hiawassee, as the U.S. Representative to the Southern States Energy Board.

"I am honored that President Obama chose to appoint me to this important position," Powell said from his Hiawassee home on Sunday. "I take this trust seriously and will work hard to promote the Administration's energy policy in the Southeastern United States."

"I have known and admired the Southern States Energy Board since the early 1990s," he said. "I look forward to enhancing our existing relationship as we work together with governors, legis-



Jim Powell

lators, member states, utilities and industries throughout the Southeastern United States.

"While the Southeast U.S. has considerable energy capacity when it comes to coal, natural gas and nuclear generation assets, we also need

to seriously consider expanding renewable energy and energy efficiency necessary to create new jobs and grow the economy. Energy drives economic development."

Powell, who moved to Hiawassee in 2006, is no stranger to the U.S. Department of Energy, having served as a senior executive with the Energy Department, managing a number of initiatives and a budget of over \$300 million. He served as the Southeast Regional Director, based in Georgia.

Powell served in a variety of roles at the U.S. Department of Energy, including program manager; regional director for the Southeast; associate deputy assistant secretary; deputy director; chief for finance and accounting; and

See *Appointment*, 2A

Animal Control ordinance changes

By Charles Duncan
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Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris amended the county's Animal Control ordinance to mirror recent changes in state law.

"We're changing our ordinance to match the new state law," Paris said. "In our ordinance, we have potentially dangerous dogs, and dangerous dogs."

"The former relates to dogs that have caused a situation that they need to be labeled a potentially dangerous dog," Paris said. "The definition of a dangerous dog, well, that meant that the dog had bitten someone and caused serious injury. You had to put them up, you had to put a sign up, they couldn't be loose in public."

"So now, Georgia has



Lamar Paris

changed their laws and definitions," Paris said. "What we call potentially dangerous dogs, will now be called dangerous dogs, and what we call dangerous will now be called vicious dogs. We've changed our definitions to match state law."

"Everything else is pretty much the same," he said. "A dangerous dog is one that bites

or aggressively pursues a person or kills another pet while not on its owner's property.

"A vicious dog is one that inflicts serious injury or death on a person, or causes serious injury to a person resulting from reasonable attempts to escape from the dog's attack," Paris said. "Or, the dog is owned, possessed or kept, harbored, trained or maintained for the purpose of fighting. There are a number of regulations that accompany the vicious dog label."

"Vicious dogs may not be left unattended in the presence of minor children, owners of vicious dogs must have at least \$50,000 in liability insurance, and a person cannot have more than one dog labeled as vicious."

A person convicted of

See *Changes*, 3A

Let's Move! Day brings out the kids

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

It could be said that Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and First Lady Michelle Obama have teamed up.

Earlier this month, Commissioner Paris proclaimed Sept. 22nd as Let's Move! Day in Union County.

The Seventh Day Adventist Church along with sponsorship from the Better Living Center, Bi-Lo, Meeks Park and the Union County Recreation Department, the Sheriff's Explorers, Union General Hospital, United Community Bank, and Young Harris College's student-athletes helped put Michelle Obama's campaign to end childhood obesity in the United States within reach.

The goal: eliminate childhood obesity by the next generation so that children



Play Ball! That's what Let's Move! is all about. Photo/Todd Forrest

born today will reach adulthood at a healthy weight.

The First Lady announced her campaign in February 2010 to encourage healthier food in schools, better food labeling, and more

physical activity in children.

Today, you can't find a peanut in any school in America. That could be bad news for the former President from

See *Move!*, 6A

Celebrate Autumn a hit at NGTC

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
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The halls of North Georgia Technical College were buzzing with activity thanks to the Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild hosting its first "Celebrate Autumn" arts and craft show on Saturday and Sunday.

Vendors from across the Southeast put their wares on display for a capacity crowd that continued to grow as the afternoon went along, despite the nasty weather unfolding outside.

The Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts, based out of Hiawassee, is a non-profit group of almost 90 artists and craftsmen from throughout Northeast Georgia, Western North Carolina and Southeastern Tennessee.

"The Arts and Crafts Guild sponsors this and all of



It was a busy weekend at Celebrate Autumn at North Georgia Technical College. Photo/Todd Forrest

the people you see working here are volunteers," Guild Volunteer Bob Lumpkin said.

"This is a fund raiser. We have volunteers who make

the snacks and cookies to raise money for our organization."

The "Celebrate Fall"

See *Autumn*, 6A

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John Campbell Folk School
Fall Festival
October 5 & 6

KELLEY & THE COWBOYS
LIVE AT THE PEACOCK PLAYHOUSE
SATURDAY, SEPT. 28TH 7 PM

Varsity Football: Friday, Sept 27th 7:30 PM @ Washington Wilkes
Middle School Football: Thurs. Sept. 26 vs. Towns County 5:30 PM
Softball: Tues. Sept 24th @ Rabun Co. 5:30 PM
Wed. Sept. 25th @ North Murray 5:00 PM