

ISO...from Page 1A

patch and the various water companies of the City and County are proud to announce that Union County's PPC Class was lowered from a 6/9 to a 4/4Y after the last survey in August. The PPC ranges from Class 10 (worst) to Class 1 (best). The new class will take effect on March 1, 2016.

What does that mean for home and business owners? It means the possibility of lower insurance rates after the effective date.

Although there are many factors that make up the homeowners insurance rates, the lowering of the PPC can contribute to the reduction of the overall insurance premium.

Some homes and businesses may see as much as 10 percent to 20 percent reduction. However, it is up to the individual insurance companies to determine premiums and not all will be affected.

If a building or home is located within 5 road miles of a fire station and has a hydrant within 1,000 feet, it is a Class 4. If a building or home is located within 5 road miles of a fire station and there is NO hydrant within 1,000 feet, it is a Class 4Y (formally class 8B).

All homes or buildings beyond 5 road miles of a fire station are classified as Class 10.

The PPC is one tool that insurers use for underwriting and to calculate premiums for fire insurance. It is based on ISO's Fire Suppression Class Schedule (FSRS). According to ISO, the FSRS "is a manual containing the criteria



ISO uses in reviewing the fire prevention and fire suppression capabilities of individual communities or fire protection areas.

The schedule measures the major elements of a community's fire protection system and develops a numerical grading called a Public Protection Classification (PPC)."

The major elements that are considered in the FSRS are emergency communications, fire department, and water supply.

It also has added a Community Risk Reduction section that recognizes community efforts to reduce losses through fire prevention, public fire safety education, and fire investigation.

Union County is one of 14 counties in the state of Georgia with a Class 4 and the only county in Northeast Georgia with a Class 4. Union County joins counties such as Hall, Fulton and Gwinnett in having a PPC Class 4.

All departments involved have worked very hard to evaluate and prepare for the survey.

The dispatch center, which makes up 10 percent of the survey, was evaluated for equipment, personnel, and training. The water departments, which make up 40 percent of the survey, were evaluated for hydrants, water pipes, supply and usage. The fire department, which makes up 50 percent of the survey, was evaluated on apparatus, equipment, training, station placement, response, and personnel on scene of structure fires.

ISO expects to survey Union County's fire suppression efforts every 3-4 years or sooner if there have been any major changes to the dispatch center, fire department or water systems. Union County Fire Department works continuously to maintain and improve Union County's ISO PPC class.

University of North GA Blue Ridge Campus ribbon cutting



University of North Georgia Blue Ridge Campus ribbon cutting ceremony

A ribbon cutting was hosted by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce for the University of North Georgia's (UNG) Blue Ridge Campus on Wednesday, December 2 at the Union County Community Center. Sandy Ott, Assistant Director of UNG, welcomed community and business leaders to the event and shared information concerning the university's newest campus.

The University of North Georgia's (UNG) Blue Ridge Campus is experiencing growth with expanded course offerings and enrollment. "UNG has a strong history of academic excellence and student success and we are very excited about the opportunities this campus presents for students in this area to complete college," said UNG President Bonita C. Jacobs. "While we have students from 46 states, we know that about 85 percent of our students come from a 30-county area in northeast Georgia, and this campus helps UNG fulfill its mission as a regional university to increase educational opportunity that leads to economic development."

The Blue Ridge Campus was established in fall 2015 in response to a need for access to

higher education that was identified through UNG's Regional Education and Economic Development Task Force, a group of more than 100 business, education, government and community leaders from northeast Georgia.

The Blue Ridge Campus, located at 83 Dunbarton Road in Fannin County, offers a variety of educational pathways that include dual-enrollment courses; a full-time program for first-time freshmen with courses that enable students to complete degrees in regional high-demand disciplines; courses for adult learners getting started in college or returning to college to complete a degree; and continuing and professional education programs for career growth or personal enrichment.

"We are pleased to announce that next semester UNG Blue Ridge will be hosting the Great Decision Lecture Series. The series will be free and open to the public with timely topics on current world events and begins in March and concludes in the fall of 2016," said Sandy Ott, associate director of the Blue Ridge Campus.

The campus began offering two courses during the fall of 2015 and has already seen

an increase in course offerings with seven core courses being offered for spring semester. In the fall of 2016, the university will launch an innovative two-year program that is expected to become the signature element of the Blue Ridge Campus. Students in the program will attend full-time and participate in an interdisciplinary curriculum that will take advantage of the region's resources to promote learning in and out of the classroom and support the timely attainment of degrees.

With over 17,000 students and campuses in Cumming, Dahlonega, Gainesville, and Oconee County, UNG is one of the state's largest public universities. UNG has been recognized nationally for its academic excellence and economic value, including being named one of the top five public universities in Georgia on *Money* magazine's list of "Best Colleges" in 2014.

Also, as one of only six federally-designated senior military colleges in the United States, UNG is The Military College of Georgia, and its leadership development experiences have earned it designation as a state leadership institution by the USG Board of Regents.

Williams...from Page 1A

population five times the size of Union County.

"I was not looking for anything, I was not doing a search for another job, but in Cartersville, the chamber of commerce there came to me and approached me about their CEO position," said Williams. "I've been so incredibly happy, have had a wonderful career, tenure here at the chamber, so I certainly was not even looking."

"But I thought, I owe it to myself to just explore the possibility, and through the process, I just really felt like that is the right next step for me in my career."

Williams informed her chamber board of her decision late last week, and so far everyone has been supportive of her move. She starts her new job in Bartow County on Feb. 1, which will give her some time to find a place to live in Cartersville.

As of press time Monday, the Blairsville-Union

County Chamber Board had not yet approved a replacement for Williams, even in a temporary capacity, but it is expected to do so in the coming weeks.

"The board is working now very diligently, right here before the holidays, to come up with a strategy," said Williams. "They're going to want to do a full search, open that up, so it will certainly take some time I would imagine."

"I'm sure that the board will want to notify the staff and all, but will keep everybody informed as to what the timelines are, and for anybody who would be interested, how to go about applying for the position. But because it's all so new at the moment, that really has not even been formulated yet, though I know it will be forthcoming quickly."

Williams has mixed feelings about her move - she's excited to see what the future holds for her in Cart-

ersville, but for nearly a decade, she's built relationships and worked with the business members of the chamber and the community at large, and has been nothing but happy in her position.

"I've always said, working with the chamber, is I just wanted to be here to serve," said Williams. "This is a very emotional decision for me, because I absolutely love Blairsville and Union County. I love the people and I love the community. My original intent and my intent all along was just to serve the community, and of course that primarily means the members."

"So if in some way after I'm gone, people say, she helped me, she helped my business to grow, she was a friend to me - any of those things would be a great legacy to leave."

Williams' first and only position with the Blairsville-Union County Chamber was as president, and she jokingly says that she has no idea why that chamber board hired her in July of 2006 - she was fresh out of college, had no full-time work experience, with only internships prior to being hired on here.

"I felt like they took a chance on me," said Williams. "I had a lot that I needed to prove to them, but I suppose they saw something in me that they felt like I could certainly handle this job. And throughout the years, I've been so fortunate with amazing board members, amazing staff, a wonderful membership."

"People have asked me across the state, how do you have such success, such a strong membership? And I said, you know, I get that it takes good leadership, but there's so much more to it than that. Everybody has been so receptive to the entire goal of just prosperity in Union County, and doing the best we can for businesses. This is not something I ever could have done alone, and honestly, I feel like, through the last nine and a half years, I'm the one that's been blessed."

In a statement of support, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said that Williams will be missed.

"I just want to wish Cindy the best," said Commissioner Paris. "She has done an outstanding job representing Union County and the City of Blairsville for years, and we only wish her the best as she moves forward in her career."

Williams, originally from Fannin County, would like to thank all of the people she has known and worked with for allowing her the opportunity to serve this community faithfully for so many years.

She will miss Blairsville and Union County, and she will be missed right back - *Believe It.*

Allstate Insurance Company ribbon cutting ceremony



Allstate Insurance Company - The Enotah Group, LLC

On Tuesday, December 15, the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting and customer appreciation celebration for Allstate Insurance Company - The Enotah Group, LLC. Agency owner, Tommy Drake, welcomed community and business leaders to include Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley and Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce president, Cindy Williams.

Mr. Drake and his staff opened the office in 2012. Since that time, they have been serving Blairsville residents and

businesses with a wide variety of insurance and financial plans to include auto, home, renter, life and business insurance as well as personal financial planning, annuities, retirement, and college savings plans. "We are pleased with the local support we have received from the Blairsville community," stated Drake. "We spend a great deal of time ensuring that we find the right type of coverage for individuals and families. Our Allstate Team is made up of professionals who are invested in our community and in the people who live and work here."

We are proud to serve the residents and businesses of Blairsville and look forward to supporting the community in the upcoming years."

"For everything your home protects, protect it back" with Allstate Insurance - The Enotah Group located at 44-B Town Square in Blairsville. For more information about this business and the benefits and services available, call (706) 745-4400, check out their website at <https://agents.allstate.com/enotah-group-blairsville-ga.html>, and be sure to like them on Facebook.

Four generations... one Santa!



Pictured from left to right are: Rhonda Dyer - grandmother, Baila Warren - child, Santa, Ashley Warren - mother of Baila and Barbara Griffin who is great-grandmother!

Arp's Cleaning Services Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



Ribbon Cutting for Arp's Cleaning Services

On Thursday, December 10, the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Arp's Cleaning Services. Owner, Richard Arp, welcomed community and business leaders to include Department of Labor representative, Janet Chapman and Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce president, Cindy Williams.

This full-service cleaning business has been serving the residents and businesses

of Northern Georgia since 1988. While using the top-of-the-line, commercial-grade, truck-mounted equipment and chemicals, Arp's Cleaning Services specializes in cleaning carpets and flooring, water and sewage damage, trauma restoration, foreclosure clean up and trash removal, as well as outside services to include gravel, grading, and much more. Mr. Arp and his highly trained staff, many who are masters in their field, are com-

mitted to providing excellence in quality and service. "There are no jobs too big or too small for my team," stated Arp. "We offer 24-hour emergency service when the need arises, and we're there to do our best to serve our customers especially when a crisis occurs."

Arp's Cleaning Services where "We can clean anything" offers free estimates and references are always available. For more information, call (706) 964-7172.

You can take Center Stage at the Peacock

The Peacock Performing Arts Center is pleased to announce "Center Stage at the Peacock," an eight week after school arts program for students in grades 3-5 on Tuesday afternoons and 6-8 on Thursday afternoons from 3:30 until 5. The program begins on January 12 and ends on March 3.

Center Stage includes 4 elements: Artist and art teacher Reba Beck will lead students through an art project. Nanette Davidson with the John C Campbell Folk School will teach traditional dance. Tom Payne, a local actor and magician, will teach magic. PPAC Artistic Director, former teacher and professional actor, Laurel Adams, is going to teach improvisation and acting. The four elements will be tied together in a final "showcase" for family and friends on Thursday, March 3 at the Peacock.

The goal of Center Stage is to give the participants a taste of performing arts. Per-

formance or theatre experience is not necessary. This will be the first of an expanding number of arts education programs by the Peacock Performing Arts Center.

The tuition for the 8 week program is \$25. A minimum of 8 students is required in each age group, so we are asking that students register and pay tuition by January 5, 2016. Registration forms are available at the Peacock Performing Arts Center box of-

fice, open from 10 to 2 Monday through Friday.

Registration forms can also be printed off our website at www.peacockperformingartscenter.com.

Our address is P.O. Box 1426, Hayesville, NC 28904. Call 828-361-3481 with questions or for further information. Be sure to visit our website for more information about the Peacock Performing Arts Center, including performance and ticket information.



(L-R): Laurel Adams, Nanette Davidson, Reba Beck and Tom Payne