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Q. How is Union County Tax Commissioner handling delinquent and past due property taxes?

A. Property taxes that are past due accrue monthly interest on the 21st of each month. The interest rate is based on prime interest rate plus 3%. Also, a 5% penalty applies every 120 days until a maximum penalty equals 20%. If you owe back property taxes, it is best to go into the Tax Commissioner's Office and work out a payment plan. Otherwise, an intent to FiFa – (File a Lien) letter is sent

and the taxpayer has 30 days to come in and pay the back taxes or a lien will be placed on your property & a report filed on your credit rating. If the taxes are still not paid, the Tax Commissioner will place a levy on the property and the lien will be sold in a Tax Sale. In this case, the taxpayers lose the property. This is the last thing the Tax Commissioner's Office wants to happen. Our office does accept partial payments on property taxes. Please call 706 439-6017 or use our website at www.uniongatax.com

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come to visit, they use our hospital, doctors, medical and emergency services, water, roads, public recreational facilities, etc. Yes, they may pay sales tax, but only for the short length of their visit – not 365 days a year as we do! One reason we don't have affordable rental property is because it is used for vacation homes. An example of a cost that should not be passed on to residents through taxes is the cost of regulating ever-booming short-term rentals. Shouldn't new development pay impact fees to cover new infrastructure costs they create, like public safety or classrooms? Consider the recent increase in property values; it serves to keep us in line or we'll see a millage rate increase!

Should you be concerned with the relationship between the City of Blairsville, Sole Commissioner, the Economic Development Authority, and the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce related to tourism? The 19 May 2022 Sole Commissioner's meeting minutes record his acceptance of an "intergovernmental agreement" between the County and the Chamber for the Chamber to receive 90% (approx. \$700,000) of funds collected from the Hotel-Motel Excise Tax for the purpose of promoting tourism - May-19-2022-Minutes-1.pdf (unioncountyga.

gov). The Chamber is a private non-profit, tax-exempt, corporation and not a subdivision of Union County government! You would think the Chamber is funded by member dues BUT that is NOT the case.

The agreement raises other questions:

1) The 10 May 2022 agreement is retroactive to 1 Jan 2022. Will Chamber activities be funded retroactively under this agreement?

2) There are no specific actions required of the Chamber that can be monitored for compliance! Should any Chamber activity be funded with public money, like their recent "casino" night?

3) Are there not more pressing needs for these county funds?

Do you as a full time, property-owning, resident have ANY say on whether you want this community to be a tourist destination? Obviously, there will be NO referendum on the question -- not even a public discussion. So, please contact your Mayor and Sole Commissioner and express support for our small rural community to remain as close as possible to what you grew up in or what attracted others to move here. This is why you need a board of commissioners to represent multiple points of view.

Wesley Hopgood

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for any second violation. This outrageously biased language would give undue power to a few unhappy neighbors to claim false violations of STR owners. Would it be right if the proposed ordinance would include a 30-day imprisonment penalty for a nuisance neighbor who simply dislikes STRs and complains without cause or brings false accusations? The proposed ordinance must include provisions addressing malicious neighbors, along with consequences for unfair accusations from such neighbors.

- The STR board would act as both judge and jury, both bringing the accusation against the STR owner, as well as judging and sentencing the STR owner. This would offer no hope of fairness to the STR owner. The proposed board lacks a system of checks and balances to prevent the board or the County Agent from acting with arbitrary unfairness toward STR owners.

I fully agree that STRs should have regulations to protect the community's right to the peaceful enjoyment of their properties. A good STR owner will seek to do so even without regulations. That is because it is in the best interest of the STR owner that the STR is an asset to the community and not a nuisance. Examples of what we did to ensure our STR preserves the good of our neighbors are: our guests must sign a noise agreement in addition to the rental agreement promising to prevent all noise from reaching our neighbors and that all music/noise is turned off by 9 p.m.; we disabled the loud speakers and purchased a small speaker which has to be placed in such a way that the music does not reach our neighbors; we are ensuring our guests follow this rule by having our

manager physically verify this every time we have an event; we have numerous signs on the premises reminding our guests to honor our neighbors' right to the quiet enjoyment of their permanent homes in the neighborhood or face steep fines and eviction. We hope all STRs will seek to benefit their community, ensuring their neighbors' good will.

While STR owners have a duty to preserve the good will of the community, the community should also seek to preserve the good will of the STRs. That is because STRs bring large amounts of revenue for the county through the 5% tax on all bookings. Additionally, STRs hire managers, cleaners, maintenance teams, landscaping teams, electricians, construction workers, and a host of other similar businesses. Lastly, STRs generate income to many local businesses: eateries, retail stores, bakeries, and other local attractions. These all work to supplement the economy of the county, enabling many young families to make a living without having to move out of the county.

Implementing sensible regulation of STRs without destroying them would enable the county to streamline the unwanted aspects of the STRs, while allowing this industry to become a positive balance to the county's economy. I urge Union County to reconsider the outrageously biased proposed STR ordinance in favor of fair regulation which would allow for the county's community to benefit from the many positive aspects of STR-generated tourism. If the commissioner truly seeks the best interest of the community, then he will rework the proposed ordinance to include fair, unbiased regulations which help both the STRs as well as protect the community.

Kristina Potra

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ever seen. The old goat must have thought he'd died and gone to heaven. Those two boys were always feeding the goat an apple or fresh green onions. The two young'uns loved the goat. They hugged and petted the goat constantly. They could hitch the wagon to the goat and ride it anywhere. They rode the wagon through the woods to their farm each and every day, and the goat never faltered. He loved pulling the wagon as much as the boys loved riding the wagon.

However, one day Pogygy came for a visit. Pogygy was my grandfather's fun-loving brother who drank too much. As usual Pogygy was drunk when he showed up at the farm, and he decided he wanted to ride the old goat. Without Granny's knowledge Pogygy got on the old goat and started spurring the goat's sides. At first the goat complied, but, soon Pogygy got too rough. The goat began running full speed, and Pogygy was laughing at the top of his lungs when all of the sudden the goat stopped. But, Pogygy didn't. He sailed over the head of the goat and into a ditch. Paul said, "Pogygy climbed from the ditch and his entire face was bleeding."

He told the boys he was going to kill that goat as my Granny walked up to the scene. The boys began crying and Granny walked over to Pogygy with her hoe handle extended. He was scared of Granny. All

she did was look at him and he decided to leave. But, I guess the goat was still angry.

Later in the day Papa drew some water from the well and poured it into a big wash tub so his sons could take a bath. For some reason Papa bent over the wash tub to move it and the old goat noticed the target of Papa's rear end. Without any hesitation and before anyone could stop it, the goat lowered his head and rammed Papa's butt. Papa went head first into that water. He must have been stunned because it took him a minute to recover. When he popped out of the water he turned and pointed his finger at the goat and said, "I will take care of you tomorrow." Paul and Bud knew exactly what that meant.

The next morning Lon Steele showed up at the house to trade a fresh cow for Granny's old milk cow. After they had negotiated, Lon told Granny, "OK, I will trade with you." Granny then told Lon, "OK, now what will you give me for the goat?" Lon was surprised, but, he quickly said, "I will give you \$2 for it." Granny smiled and agreed to the deal. Once again, Granny had used her wiles to save the day. Although Paul and Bud were not happy about giving up their goat, they knew their Daddy would have taken care of the goat when he got home. Besides, each boy had a dollar to spend the next time the peddler came by their house.

Fowler...

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ness, mercy, and care takes enduring strength from God.

Perhaps he would approve of my few lines offered in his memory: "At the end, he lay down his cowboy frame; And heard Someone familiar call out his name. 'Mount up on eagles wings,' (not on a horse!). To fly to Jesus was his final course." Baxter Black left for the land of the living. He was 77.

P.S. Don't forget to wear your glasses more often!

Williams...

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looking canes, thin out the buds to prevent over fruiting, which can cause permanent bending of canes from the weight.

Each year after harvest is completed cut plants back so that they don't become too tall. Tall plants are more difficult to harvest for people; bears and birds probably won't have that same problem.

If you have questions about pruning blueberries, contact you County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Dyer...

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area and know that they may inadvertently be close to your moving vehicle. Please help us stay safe on these accident scenes so that we can help the people involved.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Chamber...

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Keep an eye on the Chamber website to find the dates and times for your next opportunity to network and share with individuals with like interest. If we work together, life will continue to Be Better in Blairsville.

Combs...

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love of Christ, and shame on us if we don't use the opportunities that the Lord gives us to witness to those who are lost without any hope of heaven. Not all folks will agree with you; some may think you are crazy in the head, but that should not stop us planting good seeds of salvation. It's like a farmer who sows seeds in his field, not all will come to new growth, but those that do will grow in abundance and a new harvest will be yielded.

The apostle Paul knew the value of human life to the point of death, and for that reason he never gave up when the road ahead was full of promised souls that could be won for God's kingdom. I would love to see a revival break out in the Blairsville area in our church folks that would spread like wildfire, but it starts in the heart of every believer that is willing to share their testimony of what God has done for them. Yes, it's easy just to be complacent and lazy about our faith and let someone else do the work. God is well pleased with those who "Go Tell."

Frank F. Combs