

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Multi-Company Training

Multi-Company Training – Firefighter Survival: Training is a priority for the fire department. This year, we decided to place an additional focus on training; including multi-company training. On Tuesday, March 19th, Union County Fire Department conducted county-wide, multi-company training at the new training facility. Multi-Company training involves career and volunteer firefighters learning and working together. The subject of this training was firefighter survival. Firefighters were learning how to raise ladders for rescue; rapidly escape from a second story window on to a ladder; and the Denver Drill where firefighters assist an unconscious firefighter from a confined space of a burning building.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



The training provided firefighters with an opportunity to learn the latest information and techniques on each one of these subjects. The firefighters were divided into groups and rotated through each station which demonstrated and practiced a different skill.

The training was safety and survival oriented. Ladder deployment involved learning how to quickly and safely place ladders on a building for firefighter escape or rescue. Firefighters were shown ways to perform these skills alone or with a partner assisting.

The ladder bailout training involved teaching firefighters how to rapidly escape a burning room through an upper story window onto a ladder. Ladder deployment came into play during this station because the ladder must be placed at a different angle than usual. Escaping firefighters were taught how to jump out the window head first and land on the ladder while catching the rungs. Once on the ladder, the firefighter must rotate their body and escape down the ladder feet first.

The Denver Drill involves learning how to remove an unconscious firefighter out a small window from a confined room. It is called the Denver Drill because it was created by Denver Fire Department after they were unable to get a firefighter out of a similar situation. A firefighter could weight up to 300 pounds due to body weight and equipment. The confined space prevents multiple firefighters from entering and lifting the unconscious firefighter. This skill involves two firefighters entering the small space where the firefighter is located; preparing the downed firefighter; and then po-

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Profitable for Teaching

In a rare vote of unity, the Georgia Senate unanimously approved SB 83 about public high schools teaching elective Bible courses. It is a revision of a 2006 law, and clarifies that the courses can include the actual text of the Bible. This is broader than just the “history and literature” of the biblical era, the previous language in the law.

The Supreme Court has already ruled on this. In *Abington School District v. Schempp* (1963), Justice Tom Clark wrote the majority opinion. The ruling disallowed the mandatory reading of Bible verses at the opening of each school day, even though any child could be excused by a parent. He qualifies the restriction writing, “It might well be said that one’s education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization. It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment.”

The Georgia law stands on that secular ground, stating that the purpose of the elective is to “teach students knowledge of biblical content, characters, poetry, and narratives that are prerequisites to understanding contemporary society and culture, including literature, art, music, mores, oratory, and public policy.”

The Bible is actually a library of 66 books, letters, and essays written by 44 authors over 1500 years. It is the most studied and authenticated book in history. Its authors told the story as they received and experienced it, an overarching story about the revelation of God, and human origin, meaning, morality, and destiny. So, it insists on its transcendent purpose even if treated as secular literature.

Theologian George Ladd explains, “The uniqueness and the scandal of the Christian religion rest in the mediation of revelation through historical events. History is recorded because it embodies the acts of God. The revelation of God in the redemptive history of Israel finds its full meaning in the historical event of

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



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Commissioner’s Questions

Q. Should we welcome those who want to move to Union County?

A. I personally think so. Often people have looked all over to find the perfect place for them and their family and lifestyle, whether it be retirement or employment. We are very blessed that most of these people settle right into our community by volunteering their time, belonging to service organizations, increasing the membership and funding of our churches, and always being willing to help if we have problems or people in need. There is no better example than to look at all the organizations and volunteers that provide toys at Christmas for those in need, and always raising money to help local and national causes such as Relay for Life and their constant pursuit to raise funds to support cancer research.

Q. Can we do anything to slow growth down to a reasonable amount?

A. We have several self-limiting features. First, over half of our county is owned by either the USFS, TVA or Georgia Forestry, so this limits available space for growth. The other issue is that public water is not located in all parts of the county and where there is no public water, larger minimum lot sizes are required (1 1/4 acre minimum). We also do not have public sewer in most parts of the county. It is pretty well limited to areas close to the city limits of Blairsville. This prevents dense housing from encroaching all over the county. So, while these features are not intended to slow growth, they certainly help.

Q. Are there any other growth-related issues that will come up in the future?

A. Absolutely. The more people living here, the more traffic, as we are already seeing. As we have more people there will also be more problems related to noise issues. Obviously, increased traffic impacts road conditions and requires more road maintenance. So, there are good and bad points. Union County also has a robust Building and Development office which insures that all structures are built to strict building codes.

Q. What are some of the positive issues related to growth?

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



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Drug Free Mountain Life

Developing Community Resources

In our community we lack fundamental recovery and prevention services that larger cities have at their fingertips. Resources like transitional housing, advanced suicide prevention programs, residential treatment programs and services for teens and adolescents. These programs can cost thousands of dollars to develop and additional funds to staff and sustain the programs. Drug Free Mountain Life is committed to finding funds through grants and private donations to develop programs.

The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

While our local government is very supportive of local prevention and recovery services, it is not the responsibility of local tax dollars to completely fund these intervention or treatment services. Federal money is available if the need for services can be proven. The beginning of finding a solution is collecting data that will

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Letters to the Editor

In the Interest of Fairness

Dear Editor,
In the March 13 letter to the editor “Please Reconsider, Part II,” the writer makes the point that full-time residents should not subsidize part-time residents through an increase in the customer charge on their Blue Ridge Mountain EMC power bills. I wholeheartedly agree. Last week, former Commissioner Bill Kendall was concerned about increased energy bills in his own letter to the editor.

Unfortunately, subsidies are exactly what is occurring now, and the reallocation of costs on a member’s bill doesn’t mean an increased bill.

The current charge of \$21.37 covers little more than half of the actual infrastructure costs. The remaining 45 percent is built into the kWh usage portion of the bill. So, because part-time residents have low kWh usage over the year, they don’t pay their fair share of the infrastructure costs and in effect are being subsidized by full-time residents.

As the customer charge is increased over time, the kWh usage charge would be reduced (barring future increases from the TVA), result-

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Loving that Trash

Dear Bubba,
I am writing to ask a small favor of you. It may not seem like much, but is important to me. Let me introduce myself. I am the man in the orange safety vest you see walking along Gumlog Road between the fire station and Many Forks Church on Saturday mornings. The two big buckets and “pickerupper” are my tools for collecting the drink cups, beer cans and fast food packaging and scraps of food that you throw out of your pickup as you speed by. I also occasionally find your empty syringes with used needles still attached and a stinking, messy diaper that Miss Honey has stripped off Little Bubba and thrown out the window. Last Saturday, I picked up the Styrofoam packaging and plastic wrap from the dishwasher you helped install. It was scattered over a wide section of the road near the fire station. Must have blown off your pickup!

Why, you may ask yourself, would anyone want such a thankless job? It’s because my roots are so deep here and I am proud of my home. Some of my relatives came into this valley 150 years ago, owned most of it, in fact. Five generations of us are buried in the Many Forks Cemetery, and I expect to join them there soon. I haven’t been back long, just since 2004. You see, I spent 42 years working and saving to be able to return to my ancestral home. For over 24 of those years, I was on active duty with the U.S. Army

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Letters to the Editor

A Dark Secret

Dear Editor,
Many years ago, as a bride who got pregnant on her honeymoon, what other plans I might have had were subject to revision, and I had to adjust my thinking. So, nine months later, we welcomed our first child. By the time we were married four and a half years, we had three children! Now, that wasn’t exactly my perfect plan, but the children were each so unique and incredible it was hard not to feel very blessed, recognizing that multitudes of women around the world are unable to conceive. I knew that even if I were blind, I could have recognized the difference between my three babes shortly after birth.

Before I married, I volunteered at a founding hospital for five years, always serving with joy at the chance to nurture the toddlers in the division I was assigned to.

I have always been in awe of babies, and my husband and I took in pregnant young women when our own children were about 10 or older, and I volunteered at Birthright for many years, counseling about alternatives to abortion.

These days, however, babies are seen as being “wanted” or “unwanted.” And if unwanted, they are destroyed. In earlier times, a woman never came home from the doctor’s office, hearing that she was pregnant, and told her husband, “The doctor says I have something like a zygote swimming around inside me, but if we don’t want it, he will eliminate the problem.” My goodness! It wasn’t a “tissue” or a zygote or an embryo... it always was a Baby!

But I must confess a dark secret about myself that I am ashamed of. When I was in my mid-40s, the mother of teens and a pre-teen. I thought I was pregnant. I still can’t believe I considered that I did not have to go through this, and could get an abortion and no one (not even my husband) would have to know. I waited a couple of days and on the third night, before I went to sleep I told God that if this was His plan, I knew He would find a way to provide peace and calm for me. In the morning I awoke to evidence that my earlier fears were unfounded. It has always troubled me that I had, even for a moment, entertained the thought of ending the life of a child, and perhaps it was God’s way of testing if I truly believed all life belonged in His domain.

I went to a fundraising event to help the Union County Pregnancy Center in its quest to encourage women/couples to make suitable decisions, and to teach teens about making better decisions. It was an inspiring place to be, and the large crowd of people from many different denominations was like a rainbow of support, coming together to make a difference in the lives of those struggling to make a decision. Today,

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High-Strung

My great-grandmother, Laura Cummings, was a petite woman. But Daddy described her as being high-strung. For those of you that don’t understand that terminology, let me explain it with a story.

By the late 1920s, the road in front of Laura’s house was being traveled by one to two automobiles per week. The automobiles usually were driven by traveling salesmen on their way to Phil Campbell or Russellville. So, the entrepreneur in Laura decided to build a little gas station to take advantage of all the traffic traveling toward town. One day, a Fuller brush salesman stopped to sell some brushes. He was low on cash and convinced Laura to loan him a few gallons of gasoline. The salesman promised to pay Laura on his next trip.

That evening, my great-grandfather Lon came home from working in the logging woods and asked Laura about her day, after which she told him about the traveling salesman. Lon grinned and told her she would never see her money. Laura clinched her teeth, looked Lon in the eye and said, “I bet I do.” Lon shook his head and grinned.

A couple of weeks later, Laura got her chance to get her money back. She was in the garden and heard the familiar sound of a car coming down the road. She watched as the car came close to her house, and sure enough, it was the traveling salesman. She was disappointed the car didn’t stop, but she became angry because the man waved and laughed as he drove by the house. Laura looked at my 12-year-old grandfather, Columbus, and told him to hook up her mare to the family surrey.

Columbus hooked up the wagon to the horse and drove it down to the house. Laura had put on a fresh bonnet and retrieved Lon’s Long Tom shotgun. She and her son left the house and soon were in Phil Campbell. They found the man’s car parked in front of Steele’s Pool Hall. Laura had never been in a pool hall, but there is a first time for everything. She got out of the wagon and walked into the door. She promptly told the man she wanted her money. The salesman laughed at Laura. She turned on her heel and walked out of the pool room toward the surrey.

When Papa told me the story, he said, “A lot of the people standing around said they felt sorry for Laura because the man was laughing at her. But I didn’t feel sorry for Momma, because I knew what was about to happen.” Laura went to the surrey and pulled the shotgun from the

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Fertilizer Part II

This week I’m going to continue talking about fertilizers, but I’m going to go into some more specifics of different types of fertilizers and their pros and cons. I’m going to talk about organic fertilizers, weed & feeds, slow release, synthetic fertilizers, and manures.

Let’s get started with organic fertilizers. There are a number of different organic fertilizers out there. Generally speaking, these fertilizers will have lower concentrations of nutrients in them. They can be less likely to burn plants because of the lower concentrations. They can be a good fit for perennial ornamentals or vegetable gardens. Plants that are heavy feeders, like corn, are going to need more organic fertilizers applied so that their nutritional demands are met. Milorganite is an organic fertilizer that studies have shown can reduce deer browsing. Milorganite can be effective but it does have an odor that comes with it. Compost is also an organic fertilizer. Again, compost is not going to be a very strong fertilizer, but it will help build the soil organic matter, improving soil health. This is going to be beneficial in the long term for your plants.

Weed & feed products can be useful if you have issues with weeds on your properties. They are usually a granular herbicide and a fertilizer mixed together. Using one of these products can make lawn management simpler because you can kill two birds with one stone. Most of the time the herbicide is a combination of 2,4-D, mecoprop, and dicamba. These are commonly used herbicides for lawn care and are effective on broadleaf plants. The only drawback to using a weed & feed product is that you are also fertilizing the plants while you are trying to kill them. As these products have a pesticide in them, make sure you always read the label before using them.

Slow release fertilizers are a very good option in certain circumstances. Slow release will release its nutrition over a period of months instead of one shot like most fertilizers. This is beneficial for a lot of perennial plants. Trees typically don’t need a lot of fertilizer, and applying a strong fertilizer can actually stress trees. Slow release doesn’t cause stress on trees, and they last for a few months. If you have perennial ornamentals that need a little fertilizer but not a big shot all at one time, slow release might be the way to go.

Synthetic fertilizers are the most common ones used. These will usually have higher concentrations of nutrients, meaning you get a bigger bang for your buck. As I’ve already discussed,

Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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