

# 2nd Amendment...from Page 1A

and loved ones.” Sheriff Mason then invited Carol Rosenqvist to speak. Rosenqvist is the Board President and Northern District Director of the Georgia Sports Shooting Association, which is the NRA affiliate in the state of Georgia.

“We have many programs that we do, that I do, and many others do throughout the state, and one of them is Women on Target, which is an instructional shooting clinic for women only,” said Rosenqvist. “The program is set up to teach women what is normal to you, your constitutional right, your Second Amendment right.

“We teach you firearms, semi-autos and revolvers. You’re going to learn about ammunition and how it functions in the gun. You’re going to learn about safety more importantly. Safety is at the top of the NRA rules. You’re also going to learn how to shoot properly.”

Two dates have been set up for free training for women. The first class is April 21 and the second class will be held June 16. Classes will be held at the Chatuge Gun Club off Owl Creek Road in Towns County.

“I have quite a few women signed up and room for about maybe 10 more,” said

Rosenqvist. “This is at no cost to you as a woman, the Georgia Sports Shooting Association foots the bill. You do not need to have a firearm. We provide firearms, ammunition, targets and a light lunch.”

Next, UCSO Staff Sgt. Billy Purcell began the evening’s class by addressing residents on firearm laws and the laws on self-defense when protecting oneself, others and property.

“What I want to talk about tonight is deadly force,” said Purcell. “There’s force that we use to defend ourselves, and then there’s deadly force.”

Added Purcell: “Title 16-3-21 it says, ‘A person is justified in using force which is intended or likely to cause death or great bodily harm only if he or she reasonably believes that such force is necessary to prevent death or great bodily injury to himself or herself or third party, or to prevent the commission of a forcible felony.’”

Purcell is a Georgia P.O.S.T. certified instructor with Firearms and Defensive Tactics, and he interpreted this law for residents as he was taught through the many years of training and experience he has undergone.

“Let me tell you what that says,” said Purcell. “You have a right to defend yourself or a third party if you believe there is great harm coming to you, or you can use deadly force to prevent a forcible felony.”

“Now, what is a forcible felony? A forcible felony is a serious act against an individual person. Think of it as acts like rape, aggravated battery, severe trauma, injury coming to a person, that’s a forcible felony.”

Added Purcell: “If



Photo by Mark Novak

Turnout is always strong for the sheriff’s carry classes at the Blairsville Civic Center.

someone is raping a woman outside this building when we walk out, and you witness that, you can pull your weapon out and you can use deadly force on that person because rape is a forcible felony. You don’t have to get his arm twisted, tell him to stop, begging and all that kind of stuff – you can use deadly force.”

Purcell also spoke on weapons permits that evening and the laws on how to carry and transport firearms.

Georgia Weapons License holders may carry a weapon or a long gun openly or concealed in any location that is not off limits, said Purcell.

A location considered off limits, for example, would

be on private property where the owner does not want weapons, and courthouses, jails, government buildings and other places are off limits, too, with clarifying exceptions built into the law.

Just prior to the class that evening, the sheriff gave an update on behalf of the Union County Gun Club.

“We already signed up over 300 members, and I think we signed up over 22 tonight,” said Sheriff Mason.

The first general meeting for the Union County Gun Club is scheduled for Tuesday, May 1, at 6:30 p.m. at the Haralson Memorial Civic Center in Blairsville.



Photo by Mark Novak

NRA Certified Instructor Carol Rosenqvist is the Northern District Director of the Georgia Sports Shooting Association.

## New crosswalk at hospital shows teamwork in action



Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Jim Wood, Chad Hooper, Lewis Kelley, Larry Garrett, Lamar Paris and Dr. John Kelley standing out front of the new hospital crosswalk on Deep South Farm Road.

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Assistant Editor

Union General Hospital has teamed up with Piedmont Heart of Blairsville, the Union County Government and Blairsville City Hall to install a new crosswalk on Deep South Farm Road.

The crossing is located between Piedmont Heart and the hospital, and it features two flashing crosswalk signs that are easily activated with the press of a button.

Essentially, the new crossing connects the UGH campus as never before, and now, patients, doctors and other health care and hospital employees can cross the road with greater peace of mind.

It’s been about a month since the completion of the crosswalk, and the hospital has already seen a big difference in the traffic – the mere presence of the signs appears to be slowing drivers down significantly in that area.

Deep South Farm Road is a tremendously busy thoroughfare, with constant through traffic for the transfer and recycling station.

And the number of crossings has increased in the last few months since the hospital completed its new employee parking area behind Piedmont Heart, with current estimates of daily crossings between 350 and 500 people.

Specialists on hospital grounds range from dermatology to pediatric care, from gastroenterology to women’s health, and the new crosswalk has enabled the hospital to further its commitment to be an ever-expanding medical campus.

For several years now, Dr. John Kelley, a cardiologist with Piedmont Heart, has wanted a crosswalk for his employees and patients making their way to and from the hospital on a daily basis.

The pot boiled over, so to speak, when his office started the process of expanding a couple years ago.

“Once we got a plan together for our expansion, it became self-evident when you’re standing out there waiting for people to stop that don’t stop,”

said Dr. Kelley. “And speed was an issue as well.”

“People were coming through 55, sometimes 60 miles an hour right through here, where we’ve got older patients that are utilizing the hospital as well as medical offices. So, not only was it a pedestrian issue, it was a safety issue in terms of speed.”

Dr. Kelley is a longtime member of the Young Harris City Council, and he has experience getting crosswalks in place. The two flashing crosswalks on Main Street in Young Harris, for example, have had a two-fold benefit for the city in terms of deterring speed and shoring up pedestrian safety.

With that experience in mind, he reached out to UGH Facilities Director Chad Hooper, who in turn approached the hospital’s Board of Directors and CEO Lewis Kelley, as well as Larry Garrett of Union County Government.

Other partners on the project included the City of Blairsville, which upgraded the water infrastructure in the area of the crosswalk, and the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, which assisted with installation and currently supplies power to the crosswalk.

“It’s been a team effort,” said CEO Lewis Kelley. “Everybody’s worked to get it done, and it’s just a good sign of hospital and government cooperation, physician cooperation.”

Dr. Kelley agreed wholeheartedly with Lewis Kelley’s

summation of the combined effort, concurring that he, too, has been pleased with the level of cooperation.

“It’s just been great,” said Dr. Kelley. “We all have the same goal, and that’s to protect our community’s citizens, our patients, and provide them with the kind of resources they need so they can get their health care locally.”

Added Kelley: “From a cardiovascular standpoint, we draw patients from Fannin, from Cherokee (North Carolina), from Clay (North Carolina), from Towns, as well as Union. In fact, we go over across the mountain even into Franklin, and across the mountain even into Clayton, and pull patients.”

“And we see patients from Cleveland, Tennessee, here. So, this is becoming what I’ve always dreamed it could become, and that is a regional center for health care, not just a local community hospital.”

The county contributed about \$16,000 to the project, which included the installation of rumble strips leading up to the crossing, as well as the lights and painting for the crosswalk.

“We’ve continuously worked on common projects,” said Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris of partnering up with the hospital. “They don’t have to call and beg, and we don’t have to call them and beg. I don’t know of anything we’ve done that we haven’t been able to get along on.”

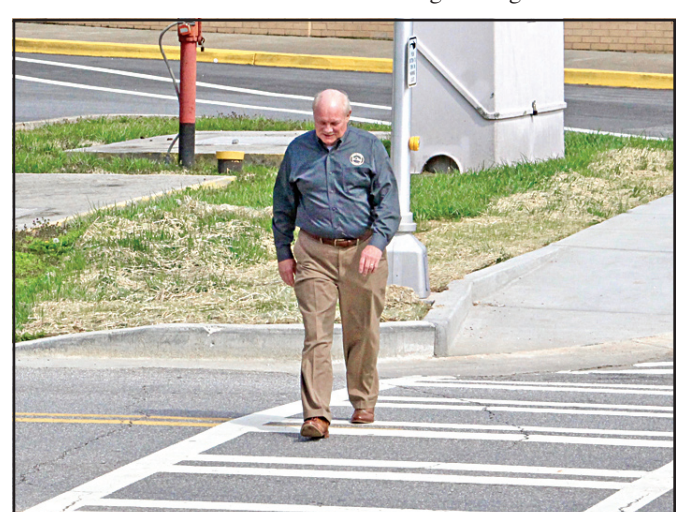


Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Union General Hospital Inc. CEO Lewis Kelley putting the new crosswalk to the test.