

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Wednesday, June 3, 2020

Farmers Market to open Saturday with precautions in place

By Shawn Jarrard
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Come June 6 at 7 a.m., the Union County Farmers Market will join the rest of the state in reopening amid optimistically trending COVID-19 data.

However, Market Manager Mickey Cummings wants people to know that public safety is and will remain priority No. 1 as the annual season gets underway.

As such, in order to provide farmers an income and people fresh produce during a pandemic, the leisurely, "come and stay a while" feel many have come to cherish over the years will have to be placed on temporary hold to ensure all appropriate virus precautions

are in place.

Fortunately, the outdoor Farmers Market appears to be a great venue for people looking to shop even as COVID-19 continues to circulate, as the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention has said that transmission is not thought to occur as readily outdoors, on surfaces or through food.

Armed with data and guidelines from federal and state health officials, the county and Farmers Market staff have worked for months now to establish and fine tune an opening plan to optimize safety conditions for market vendors, patrons and the community at large.

This plan features a bevy of revised operations for the market, and vendors have been

briefed on the extensive changes and are ready to implement them.

For starters, only farmers and vendors related to agriculture and personal hygiene (lotions, soaps, hand sanitizers, etc.) may participate initially, with no crafters or baked goods vendors permitted for the time being, though Cummings is hopeful the market can welcome them back soon.

The vendor reduction is aimed at maximizing space for vendors and customers alike to promote responsible social distancing. At full capacity, the market has about 64 regular vendors filling its 80-plus stalls, though the reduction will result in just 31 vendors serving

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It may be some time yet before the Farmers Market returns to the bustling social environment of yesteryears, as depicted in this photo taken on a warm market day in 2016.

Photo/North Georgia News

Attention: CodeRED 'All Call' coming June 4, Dyer says

By Shawn Jarrard
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Stay tuned, Union County residents, because at 2 p.m. on Thursday, June 4, local Emergency Management Agency Director David Dyer will be making an "All Call" to all businesses, residents and registered phone numbers via the CodeRED Community Notification System.

CodeRED is the county's new emergency notification system, and Dyer will be reaching out with a pre-recorded message introducing people to the new system.

The county switched over to CodeRED from the longstanding Wireless Emergency Notification System, or WENS, on May 1, and it was a seamless transition.

"If you were registered with our previous system to receive notifications on your



David Dyer
Union County EMA Director

mobile phone from Union County, you will continue to receive them," Dyer said. "All Union County residents are strongly encouraged to register to update your information. Some information may be up to 10 years old.

"There is no charge to

register for or use CodeRED, and your personal information will be kept confidential. Registering for CodeRED is quick and easy."

People can register by texting "UCALERTS" to 99411; visiting tinyurl.com/ucalerts; or calling the EMA at 706-439-6091 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Alerts can be received via text, voice call, email or TDD/TTY (Telecommunication Device for the Deaf/Teletypewriter).

CodeRED phone calls come from the following numbers: 800-566-9780 for weather warnings; 866-419-5000 for emergency calls; or 855-969-4636 for general calls.

Should a recipient miss a call from one of those numbers, he or she can dial the number

See *CodeRED*, Page 2A

Von Hof wins \$3,000 in startup money in the 2020 INCubatorEDU contest

By Jarrett Whitener
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Congratulations to Hannah von Hof of Union County High, who won the 2020 INCubatorEDU entrepreneurship contest that took place over the 2019-2020 school year. As the winner, she has been presented with \$3,000 to start her business.

Von Hof graduated on May 22 with the Class of 2020 and was heavily involved in the Future Farmers of America, so she used the class to develop her idea of making a mat that was safer for swine.

"With me being in our local FFA and state FFA, I thought of some of the problems we have in our swine industry," von Hof said. "Taking our swine from shows and bringing them back home, some of them would get cuts and stuff like that.



Hannah von Hof

"What I ended up coming up with was a silicone mat, and it is technically a disease prevention swine mat. The mat will heat, cool, comfort, offer protection and most importantly prevent any diseases from spreading while the swine is on the mat."

Von Hof was proud

of the other students in the competition and was thankful for the opportunity that she had to be a participant and develop her idea.

"If you win or if you don't, then you will have the option to build upon it and get a patent or market it if you want," von Hof said. "I would say this was a unique year.

"Every group at one point came together at the end of the year, and honestly, at the end, I thought that any of us could win. I think that any of the students would be able to have a successful business if they went through with it.

"I would really like to thank my mentor Mike Donahue and my teacher Howard McCombs, because there is no way that I would have made it through the year without their support."

In the fall, von Hof

See *Von Hof*, Page 2A

EMC to hold annual meeting Sept. 24; candidate forms due June 24th

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YOUNG HARRIS – Blue Ridge Mountain EMC's Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, Sept. 24, at the Towns County Recreation Center in Young Harris.

In-person voting will tentatively begin at 4 p.m. followed by the business session at 5 p.m. All members are invited to attend.

This year marks the 82nd

Annual Meeting of Blue Ridge Mountain EMC.

BRMEMC's Board of Directors made selections to the Nominating Committee and Credentials and Elections Committee during the Tuesday, May 19, board meeting.

The Nominating Committee is comprised of these members:

Cherokee County, North Carolina: Bruce Little, 828-837-9335.

Clay County, North Carolina: Guy Grant, 828-421-8819; and Bobby Shook, 828-389-3866.

Fannin County: Chris Collins, 706-835-6300.

Towns County: Alan Rogers, 706-994-7785; and Jason Dyer, 706-781-8063.

Union County: Gregory Buchanan, 706-745-1423; Paul Thompson, 706-897-8215; and Luke Colwell, 706-897-4097.

Members of the committee have information packets on the responsibilities of a board member along with director candidate forms for those who may be interested in being nominated.

This information is also available on the EMC website on the Board Candidate Info page under the About Us menu, and available for pick up at the EMC headquarters in Young Harris.

Anyone interested in being nominated will need to complete a Director Candidate Form by June 24.

Survey and Ballot Systems will once again handle the voting process for the upcoming meeting. Mail-in ballots, online voting and in-person voting will be options for voting in this year's election. Members can expect

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Last week to vote early in primary; Election Day is June 9

By Shawn Jarrard
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Early in-person voting for the June 9 General Primary, Presidential Preference Primary and Nonpartisan General Elections ends Friday, June 5.

This week, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., locally registered voters can cast their ballots in the Jury Assembly Room on the bottom floor of the Union County Courthouse, which is accessible via a clearly marked entrance around the corner from the lower main entrance to the courthouse.

As of Saturday, May 30, 731 people had voted early in person. In terms of absentee ballots, 6,572 of 18,000 registered voters had requested one as of Friday afternoon, with 3,962 having been returned.

The high number of mail-in absentee ballots being



Signs like these can be found on the lower level of the Union County Courthouse, pointing the way to the advanced in-person voting area in the Jury Assembly Room. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

cast this year due to COVID-19 has prompted the State Election Board to approve an emergency rule giving local election officials the option of opening mailed absentee ballots early to allow more time

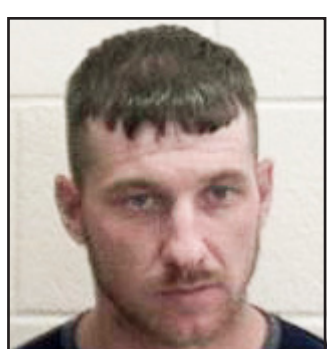
See *Early Voting*, Page 3A

Two suspects arrested on gun charges over Memorial Day Weekend

By Shawn Jarrard
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A Union County man awaiting trial for multiple felony charges is back behind bars after being arrested Friday, May 22, for probation violation and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

In the leadup to his arrest, Aaron Dale Patterson, 31, was out on bond related to 2018 charges of aggravated child molestation, statutory rape, theft, possession of methamphetamine, and burglary in Union County, and he was on probation for charges originating in Towns County.



Aaron Dale Patterson

The Union County Sheriff's Office responded to a Blairsville residence where Patterson was staying on May 22 to serve a probation violation warrant out of Towns County for



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the Department of Community Supervision, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Once there, deputies discovered a gun on the scene

See *Arrested*, Page 3A

Local woman dies after head-on collision on Murphy Highway

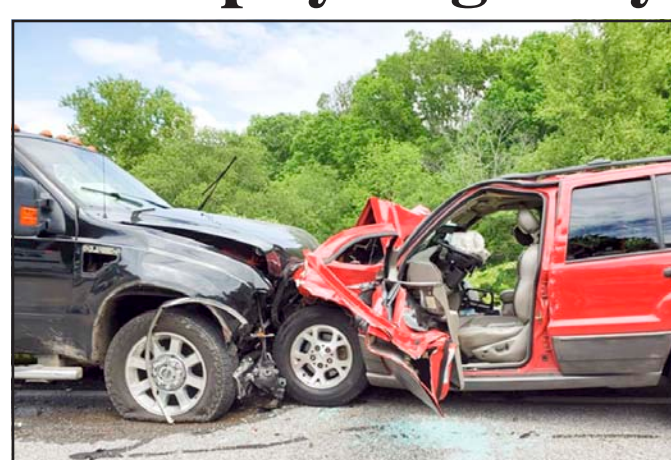
By Shawn Jarrard
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A Union County woman died Friday following a head-on collision on Murphy Highway near McCarter Drive that same afternoon, Union County Deputy Coroner Jeff Fortenberry said Monday.

The accident happened around 1:45 p.m. on May 29 when a southbound Ford F-350 flatbed pickup towing a trailer collided with a Jeep Cherokee traveling north.

Kathy Deen, 60, of Blairsville, sustained severe

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A Specialized Collision Reconstruction Team with the Georgia State Patrol investigated this fatal accident on Murphy Highway Friday afternoon.

Photo/Submitted

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Union County Election Results will be available on Wednesday, June 10th after 10 AM

See our ONLINE UPDATE for details and results from the Primary Election.

Election results will be available at www.nganews.com