

# Land Transfer...from Page 1A

the process.”

In the three years it took DNR to conduct its various site tests – environmental and archaeological assessments, sound studies, etc. – the land nearby had begun to be divided up for future residential

development.

So, based on the property not being able to contain all shotgun pellets, and due to the proposed range's proximity to future homes, Paris felt he had no choice but to abandon the project.

“In a growing county, those are the kinds of things that happen,” said Paris. “We’ve got the property, we own it – it’s sitting up there and we don’t have any use for it.”

State law says the county can sell the land through a bidding process, but in order to avoid any semblance of conflict of interest and to keep from tying his staff up with the sale of the property, Paris decided it would be best to have the Development Authority sell it for the county.

Paris has suggested a selling price of \$175,000, though who buys it and for how much will be completely up to Development Authority Executive Director Mitch Griggs and his Board of Directors.

The Development Authority will also be free to seek out a property reevaluation prior to listing it for sale.

“We don’t have particular designs on that property in terms of our developing it, so we’ll sell it,” said Griggs. “Of course, we would always hope

that it gets sold to someone for a ‘highest and best use’ for a piece of property.

“Ideally, it could be developed in a commercial way. It’s probably not terribly well-suited for manufacturing, may or may not be well-suited for residential, and it’s a bit far out for us to look at trying to locate national retailers out there.

“But commercial could certainly be a potential use, where you’ve got a raw piece of land that hopefully in the future becomes something where there’s some private investment on it and some jobs created on it.”

The arrangement will

allow for the Development Authority, which is an economic development agent of the county, to keep an as-of-yet determined percentage of the property sale in compensation for its time.

And Paris said he was glad to be working with Griggs and the Development Authority Board to sell the land, as the close-working relationship between the two has benefited residents in the past.

Since the land was originally purchased with SPLOST funds, the remainder from the sale will go back into the county’s SPLOST account.

In lieu of a dedicated

4-H shotgun range, Paris has contracted with a private landowner in recent years to give 4-H’ers a place to practice shooting.

Once the Development Authority sells the land, Paris said he should be able to use the funds to purchase some new trap throwers and other equipment for the Shotgun Teams.

Separately, the county is in the process of trying to lease a piece of U.S. Forest Service land for use as a public target range, with help from the local Union County Gun Club.

The county should learn by late summer whether the land lease will be granted.

## George Berry...from Page 1A

Chief Administrative Officer, and his successor, Mayor Maynard Jackson, continued Berry in that position until the late ‘70s, when Jackson, along with the airlines and other stakeholders, selected Berry as Airport Commissioner.

It was in his years as Airport Commissioner that Berry had a major positive impact on the development of Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, transforming it into a world-class international airline hub, which it remains to this day.

Mayor Andrew Young kept Berry on as Airport Commissioner throughout his administration, and in 1983, Berry accepted a nomination by Gov. Joe Frank Harris to be the Georgia Commissioner of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Berry lost his bid for lieutenant governor in 1990 and went to work for Cousins Properties, one of Atlanta’s premier real estate development firms, where he retired in 2004 as a senior vice president.

“As I reflect on my career, I often think about how lucky I have been,” said Berry. “As a young man in Blairsville, and as an avid reader of Georgia history, I had this idea that we could do better as a state and as a people.

“There was no good reason why we needed to be poorer than the people of the rest of the nation. I was fortunate enough to be able to act on that conviction and to involve myself in economic activities that helped lift us all.

“That is one of the main reasons that I am at peace in my old age and am eternally grateful for the life lessons I was taught growing up in Blairsville and how I was able to put them in practice in life.”



George Berry receiving an award from the Kiwanis Club of Atlanta in the early 2000s. Photo/UGA

In addition to Berry’s myriad responsibilities throughout his working career, he held several positions outside the parameters of his jobs.

Some of those extracurricular positions were: Chairman of the Metropolitan Atlanta Olympic Games Authority; Chairman of the Emory University Board of Visitors; Chairman of the U.S.O. Council of Georgia; Chairman of the Board of the Wesley Woods Geriatric Hospital; and Chairman of the Georgia State University

Alumni.

He also served as a member on the Stone Mountain Memorial Association, the Board of Trustees of Young Harris College, and the Board of the Mercer University Press.

Berry’s topic when he speaks to the Union County Historical Society on June 29 will be his experiences throughout his working years and how his Blairsville roots carried him through.

## Branan Lodge receives new American Flag donation



Homer Jinks donated a new American flag to Branan Lodge. Homer is currently a resident of Branan Lodge. Homer served our great country in the 8th Army, he also served Guard Rounds. He was recognized by Air Flight in Washington, DC in 2017. We appreciate Homer for his years of service and kindness to Branan Lodge. We are honored to display the new flag at Branan Lodge. NT/June 19, 2019/CA

## Mountain Fling Indoor Arts & Crafts Show June 22 and 23

Mountain Fling, an indoor Arts & Crafts Show will be held on Saturday, June 22 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Sunday, June 23 from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the North Georgia Technical College Blairsville. 35+ artisans will be offering their handcrafted items for sale which will include soap, jewelry, pottery, cabin decor, wood cutting boards, paintings, and more.

Admission is free and there will be a light lunch available for purchase.

## Union/Towns Tea Party meeting

The Union/Towns County Tea Party now meets the 4th Tuesday of each month, 6:30 PM at the Community Center.