

School...from Page 1A

Gap School Principal Carol Knight said she's excited for a new program that's starting at the Suches campus.

"This will be the kickoff year for the Mountain Heritage Program, which is a place-based project for the whole school," said Knight. "It's to learn about and honor the Appalachian heritage, to learn about agricultural practices from the past, how they're being done presently, and how these students can apply those practices to the future."

Over at Union County High, Principal C.T. Hussion said students can pick up their internet use forms during Meet Your Teacher in order to get their Chromebooks on the first day of school. Otherwise, they'll have to wait until Monday.

"It's nice to start the new year with the building completed," said Hussion, referencing the finished second floor of the high school C-Wing. "The staff has worked really hard to get everything looking very good. Everything's neat and clean. We're ready for students."

Over at the middle school, Principal Gwen Stafford is excited about the new facilities her students will have access to this school year.

"We've completed our new addition," said Stafford. "So, we're excited about having an agriculture lab. We have theater arts that actually has a mobile stage. We have a chorus room that's no longer in the gym. Those are all ready to go."

"We'll continue to focus on writing across the school and doing everything that we can for everybody to succeed."

Also new this year, Jerry Bavero will helm Union County Elementary as school principal. Bavero has been with the system going on 13 years, having served in a variety of roles from elementary school guidance counselor to middle and high school assistant principal.

He is taking over from longtime principal Trish Cook at the elementary school, who retired at the end of last school year.

"We have an excellent school, we've got an incredible staff, so we just want to build on our successes here," said Bavero, noting that writing will be a special focus this year. "We're going to have a behavioral RTI person, so we're kind of bringing the consistency down from the primary school."

"They had a behavioral RTI person last year, and so we're following up with that and bringing that to the elementary school."

According to the RTI Action Network, "Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-tiered approach to help struggling learners," where progress is closely monitored "at each stage of intervention to determine the need for further research-based instruction and/or intervention."

As for Principal Millie Owenby at Union County Primary, she said everyone was ready for the first day of school.

"We're going to focus this year on some balanced literacy with our students, and getting our curriculum seamless, really from pre-K all the way up on into the elementary school. So, we're working very closely with the elementary to do that."

Union County Schools Superintendent John Hill is starting his first official year as superintendent, and he, too, is excited for the school year that lies ahead.

"We're all in the same boat, and we're going to row it in the same direction to serve the kids," said Hill. "My background is with troubled kids, and I see tremendous value in those kids. And I think you should put a lot of resources and effort into turning their life around and helping them be productive citizens."

"And special education, I don't think anyone would argue that all those kids are important. I have the same feeling about employees, that they're all very important. You let a cafeteria lady miss a day of work - they're going to be much more missed than I would be if I miss a day of work."

New to all the schools this year is the Union County Schools Police Department, headed up by Chief Chad Deyton.

The school board's decision to create the police department highlights the system's continued commitment to school safety, especially in light of an increased national emphasis on student safety due to high profile school shootings.

"We're just super excited to get it kicked off," said



Union County Board of Education Chairperson Cindy Odom with fellow Board Member Keith Potts in their July 26 called meeting.
Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Deyton. "We know the first week's going to be rough with the traffic. We're just hoping to keep it as safe as we can, keep the students and faculty safe."

Added Deyton: "A big goal at first is just testing the waters, seeing what we need to do safety wise, if there's anything we need to tweak or change or beef up a little."

Last week, the school board accepted bids on new vehicles to serve as police cars in a called meeting on July 26.

The system is purchasing four new Dodge Durango trucks for the police department, which will cost \$24,000 apiece from Jacky Jones Ford. It will cost an additional \$3,000 per vehicle, or \$12,000 total, to

outfit the four trucks as police vehicles.

Jacky Jones was one of four vendors to bid on the cars, and 83 vendors received a notification about the bid.

Also, the school system is upgrading its entire radio system with digital radios, which will improve the quality of school communications and also work seamlessly with the county's ongoing plans to upgrade its emergency radio system to digital.

Mountain Communications Inc., a local company, won the bid for the radios at \$56,074. Mountain Communications was one of three vendors to submit bids, and 57 vendors received a notification about the bid.

Tincher kids grow 12' tall sunflowers



Lelah, Lindsey, Drew and Decker Tincher

The Tinchers couldn't get an accurate measurement, but the tallest one was close to 12 foot. They also grew corn, 4 varieties of tomatoes, peppers, okra, broccoli, collards, beets, Swiss chard, radishes, sugar snap peas, green beans, eggplant, squash, zucchini, kale and herbs. They love picking their vegetables and delivering them to neighbors.

UNION COUNTY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------|
| Garden Tours | Every Monday: GMREC (May-Oct) | 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. |
| Children's Story Time | Union County Library | 11 a.m. |
| Kiwanis Club | Sammies Sub Shop | Noon |
| Civil Air Patrol | Blairsville Airport | 6:30 p.m. |
| Boy Scouts #101 | United Methodist Ch | 7 p.m. |
| | Every Tuesday: | |
| Tri State Bus. Women | Cabin Coffee | 8 a.m. |
| MMQG Tues. Strippers | Mtn. Presbyterian Ch | 9:30-2:30 p.m. |
| Get Fit | First UMC | 5:15 p.m. |
| Smoky Mtn. Melodies | United Methodist Ch | 6:30 p.m. |
| Hi Country Harmonizers | Branan Lodge | 6:30 p.m. |
| | Every Wednesday: | |
| BINGO | Civic Center | 7 p.m. |
| | Every Thursday: | |
| Butternut Ladies Golf | Golf Course (Apr-Oct) | 8:30 a.m. |
| Masonic Luncheon | Cook's Restaurant | 11:30 a.m. |
| Rotary Club | NGTC | Noon |
| Get Fit | First UMC | 5:15 p.m. |
| | Second Monday of each month: | |
| MMQG Sewcials | Mtn. Presbyterian Ch | 10 a.m.-3 p.m. |
| Enotah Chapter #24 | Masonic Lodge | 7:30 p.m. |
| Disabled A.m. Veterans | Veterans Center | 7 p.m. (Jan-Oct) |
| | Second Tuesday of each month: | |
| FPL Retirees | Hole in Wall Rest. | 9 a.m. |
| Historical Society Bd. | Old Courthouse | 10:30 a.m. |
| Mtn Laurel Arts/Crafts | Union County Library | 10 a.m. |
| Active/Retired Fed Emp. | Grinds & Glazes | Noon |
| Mtn. Sounds Dulcimer | Sr. Citizens Center | 1:30-3:30 p.m. |
| Mountain Coin Club | N. GA Tech | 6 p.m. |
| Blairsville PTO | UC Primary School | 6 p.m. |
| Eastern Star #304 | Location not listed | 7:30 p.m. |
| Band Boosters | UC Middle School | 7:30 p.m. |
| | (Aug through May, except Dec) | |
| | Second Thursday of each month: | |
| Appalachian Shrine Club | Shrine Building | 6:30 p.m. |
| Democratic Party | Unity Church of B'ville | 6:30 p.m. |
| Trout Unlimited | UC Community Cntr - A | 6:30 p.m. |
| Sons Confederate Vet. | UCB Community Rm | 7 p.m. |
| Knights of Columbus | Marian Hall | 7:30 p.m. |