

## 4-H's team up with Friends of NRA

North Georgia News  
News Special

Union County 4-H Shooting Sports Teams are working with Friends of NRA to hold a banquet at the Haralson Memorial Civic Center on Saturday, Aug. 13, at 6 p.m.

This banquet helps to raise money for grants given by Friends of NRA to organizations like the 4-H teams and church shooting sports organizations in counties all over Georgia.

Money raised from last year's banquet helped Union and Towns County 4-H Shooting Sports archery, BB and shotgun – to buy targets, ammunition, BB guns, sights, kneeling mats, as well as hearing and eye protection.

Friends of NRA banquets boil down to one goal: fundraising for the future of the shooting sports.

Plus, there's something for everyone at a Friends of NRA banquet.

From the moment you walk in, the atmosphere is brimming with excitement. Whether you're keeping an eye on that unique item in the silent auction, trying your luck at the one of the game tables, or just dining on something delicious, you'll be

sure to have a good time.

It's a family-friendly event that is chock-full of exclusive, limited edition merchandise – firearms, knives, art, jewelry and more. Not to mention all the great people you're sure to meet along the way.

Whether attending a Friends of NRA banquet for the fun, the fellowship, or simply for the fundraising, you can be confident that you are helping safeguard programs across the nation that prepare today's youth to be tomorrow's guardians of the Second Amendment.

Foundation grants provide essential program funding, ensuring the availability of quality training and educational opportunities nationwide.

Grants benefit programs such as youth education, law enforcement training, hunter education, conservation, firearms and marksmanship training and safety, and much more.

Through its grant support of eligible educational programs, the NRA Foundation carries out its important educational mission across the country.

Foundation grants allow

shooting sports-related programs to develop, expand and enhance their educational curricula to deliver valuable services to millions of Americans.

The banquet will feature a scrumptious barbecue pork and grilled chicken dinner with all the fixings, a live auction, silent auction and many games of chance to win guns, ammo and more, during this "dinner and a show!" combo.

Banquet tickets are available at the Union County 4-H office for \$30 apiece, or if you want to by a couple's ticket you can save some money at \$50 for two!

If you plan to attend, tickets need to be purchased by Wednesday, Aug. 10, so that the caterers can obtain a head count for the evening.

However, individual tickets will still be available at the door Saturday night! Tickets can be purchased by check, cash, or credit/debit card.

For more information or for tickets you can call Jammie Murphy at the Union County Extension/4-H office (706) 439-6030.

Please come out and help support the Friends of NRA as well as the local Shooting Sports Teams!

## Murphy USA...continued from Page 1A

the site with symbolic golden shovels, plus a few TNT props to emphasize their explosive levels of excitement for the new venture.

"Everybody should be excited about Murphy, because for one, we're going to be the lowest price competitor," said Gardner. "If you're looking for great quality service, great people, great gas, you want to come here."

Blairsville will be the 12th store in Gardner's district, which encompasses much of Northwest Georgia and the lower part of North Carolina.

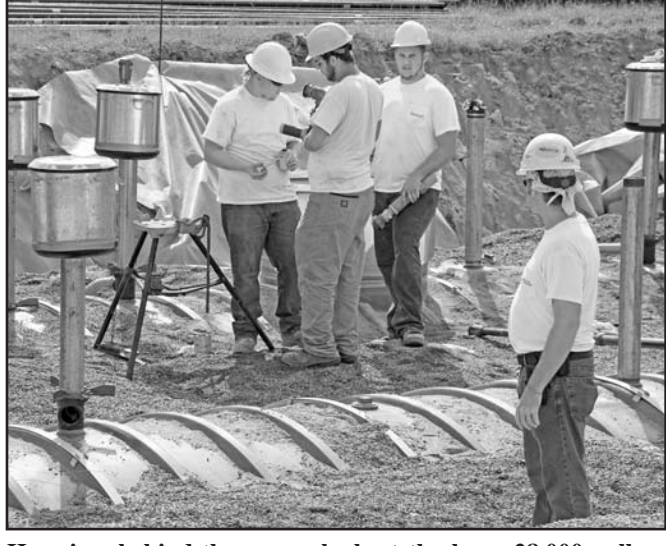
Murphy USA stores are known for their affiliation with Walmart, often situated in the parking lots of the merchandising giant, though the two are separate companies. Murphy gas stations not located next to Walmart are known as Murphy Express stores.

This particular location will feature a 1,200-square-foot walk-in convenience store, what Gardner says will be a "one-stop shop" for snacks, beverages, tobacco products and more. Such a large layout is very different from the 80- to 150-square-foot kiosk locations, where customers walk up to a little manned building and transact business through a window and slot.

The Blairsville store will be able to handle 10 cars at the pumps, will offer both unleaded and diesel fuels, and for the first three months will be open around the clock, at least until the store figures out whether or not there is a demand to be open 24/7.

Blairsville Store Manager Warren wants people to know that her Murphy USA will be offering deals regularly to customers, many of which are highlighted at MurphyUSA.com and will help patrons to save on their gasoline bills.

"I'm really excited to



Here is a behind-the-scenes look at the huge 28,000 gallon fuel tanks located at the new Murphy USA in Union County. Caliber1 Construction is building the new station.

be coming here with Murphy USA, offering all the deals that we have," said Warren. "It's a really great place to work. They offer great things for their employees, and they like to promote from within. We all like to have fun – we're not so stuffy."

Warren is currently looking for an assistant manager in Blairsville, and to fill several cashier positions. Applications can be found at the Murphy USA website.

"Anybody that's coming in for employment, we want good, reliable people, people with positive attitudes," said Warren. "People who have a really good can-do attitude. Like I said, promotions come. They very much like to promote from inside the store rather than searching from outside and getting somebody in."

"So the chances are, if you get in here from the ground up, like me – I've been with the company for three years, and I've already got my own store. If you're in here and you're doing your job, and you're really positive about it and you can put it out there

with your attitude and your work ethic, you're going to get somewhere. It's going to be a career rather than just a cashier position."

Gardner said that, once the store is up and running, residents can look forward to seeing Murphy USA throughout the community.

"We're also very visible in the community," said Gardner. "If there's anything (people) want Murphy USA to participate in, all they have to do is ask. Every store can sponsor up to two sports teams every year, so that's big for the community. As long as it's not affiliated through the school district, they can sponsor sports programs."

A sponsorship could include team jerseys for a tee ball team, or helping a team to purchase beverages for games, said Gardner.

Added Warren: "I'm just really excited to get to know Blairsville and get to know the community, and see all the faces that come in, and get to know everybody that's going to be involved and come in to see me on a daily basis."

scorched or dead. Then, in the spring before the flowers begin to bloom, protect the tree with a fungicide.

Mattee's last order of business was the discussion of mummy berry. The name may have a disarming effect, but the actual effects of mummy berry are quite harmful.

Mummy berry is a disease that targets blueberry bushes. The fungus that causes the disease creates discoloration and shriveled berries that are reminiscent of mummification.

"These fruits have been infected by a fungus," said Mattee. "They have mutated and cannot mature properly. Some of the symptoms are the leaves and flowers turning brown and falling off. Also, the secondary symptom is the berries turning a pale color and shriveling."

The fungus lives inside the berries which, when they fall, will spread the disease around the bush itself. Mattee suggests complete re-landscaping of the area surrounding an infected blueberry bush, covering the area with fresh pine bark mulch afterward.

Before her time with the Movers and Shakers came to an end, Mattee invited all in attendance to a workshop at the Georgia Experiment Station in Union County on September 28.

The workshop, called Forestry Field Day, will feature specialists from the University of Georgia discussing wildlife, tree-specific diseases and much more. The workshop is open to the public with a \$5 admission charge that includes lunch.

For more information, call the Union County Extension Office at (706) 439-6030

## Millage...continued from Page 1A

regular monthly meeting with Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley, on Tuesday, Aug. 2.

Councilman Tony Dyer addressed the rest of the council that Tuesday to suggest holding a planning meeting before setting next year's millage rate, for 2017, in which they would discuss the financial pros and cons of lowering the millage rate, keeping it the same or doing away with it completely.

Also in the meeting, the council approved the contract between the city and Denny Laney of Laney Construction, which allowed his company to begin construction of the new airport terminal building as early as Monday, Aug. 8.

Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll shared with the council the latest statistics from his department – for the month of July, BPD officers responded to 118 calls, bringing the year-to-date call total to 706, and they patrolled 6,944 miles.

Cindy Neely addressed the council on behalf of the city's officers, in order to thank residents for their support – verbally and in letters, cards – while police officers nationwide deal with increasing adversity in performing their duties.

"We have been very blessed and have felt (that support)," said Neely, who is clerk of Municipal Court and secretary for the Blairsville Police Department.

Judy Lanier introduced her friend Kathie Tiger Garrett to the council, as both women attended the August regular meeting to speak on behalf of the We Are Still Here Tri-State Native American Initiative.

## Audit...continued from Page 1A

Fund) expenditure side, those increased as well, but not quite as significant," said Pilgrim. "They went up \$274,671, or about 2 percent."

Yet another positive in the audit was the FY 2015 unassigned fund balance compared to that of FY 2014.

The unassigned fund balance is not a reserve fund, per se, but can be seen as an emergency reserve of sorts that, if the county were to experience a major economic downturn, it could still pay its bills for a certain amount of time by using the unassigned fund balance.

For FY 2015, the unassigned fund balance total was \$5,036,128, which equals nearly five months' worth of county FY budget, guaranteeing that 39.5 percent of expenditures could be covered in a fiscal year.

The commissioner is excited about this uptick in unassigned fund balance, as in FY 2014, the balance was \$3,181,639, or only about three months of potential emergency reserve.

"I've been in office going on 16 years, and I'd have to go back and look for sure, but I don't think we've ever gotten really over three months of fund balance," said Commissioner Paris.

"Typically, all the auditors we've had in the past like for you to have at least two (months of fund balance).

"And it took us a long time to get to two months, because we always maintain the second, third or fourth lowest property tax rate in the state of Georgia. So we don't charge high taxes and then take your money and put it in the bank and draw interest off it.

## Lawrence...continued from Page 1A

his own radio show.

He recently released an album titled "Evolution," which includes remakes of his greatest hits. His last studio album was the critically-acclaimed "Headlights, Taillights, and Radios" from 2013.

"Management is in the process of securing a new label deal for me, so we're planning on going back into the studio in September to begin working on another project," Lawrence told the Towns County Herald.

"I've got a syndicated radio show titled 'Honky Tonkin' that I've been doing for almost two years, and we're in 52 markets around the country. We primarily play Honky Tonk Music from the '80s, '90s and early 2000s."

In 2009, Lawrence released a Christian Music album titled "The Rock." While he admits that releasing a Christian album has been a goal of his for a long time, Gospel and Bluegrass Music weren't a major influence growing up.

"That is something I've wanted to do for a while, and I would like to do another gospel album in the future," he said. "I'm a Christian believer and have been since I was a kid, and have really gone back to it more

We Are Still Here is a nonprofit entity with a goal of inviting the tribal officials of four sovereign nations – the United Keetoowah Band, the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, the Muscogee Nation and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians – in a welcoming back to their ancestral home of Blairsville and Union County.

A major step in accomplishing that goal is the raising of funds to go toward a 10-foot-tall bronze statue of a Native American stickball player, which will become an important landmark in Blairsville commemorating the Native American origins of the area.

As Garrett stated in the council meeting, We Are Still Here is roughly halfway to their ultimate fundraising goal of \$32,000 for the statue, and she and Lanier wanted to spread the word about what the group is doing.

One of their goals is to get the governor to officially invite the four Native Nations to the state, and Garrett highlighted the fact that Native Americans "have never been invited home" after having been driven from Georgia.

"When my son was in history class, they were teaching on Georgia history, and he was told there's no more Muscogee (Creek)," said Garrett, a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. "And yet here he sits, born and raised in this community, and a tribal member – we are still here, and that's where that name came from."

Added Garrett: "Just the thought of coming home

and being on home land, and just to be invited, is an honor in and of itself, and that's all they're looking for. And again, if we can get that from the governor...wow, wow – that's all I can say about it, it would be a true healing process for the Native people."

Darren Harper, program manager of the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority, updated the council with his department head report on DDA progress.

Harper informed the council that the DDA would be holding a called meeting that Friday, Aug. 5, to review offers on two parcels located within the Haralson Property Development behind city hall.

The called DDA meeting did take place, though primarily in closed session, and Harper said in the council meeting that he hopes to have more concrete details to share with the council in the September meeting of city council and mayor.

Harper also told the council about a new event that is coming to the downtown area – Downtown Blairsville Outdoor Movie Night.

The event is co-sponsored by the DDA and the Union County Historical Society, and will take place on Saturday, Aug. 20, at 8 p.m., with the use of a projection system on the lawn of the Mountain Heritage Museum.

Organizers are in the process of selecting a car-themed movie for the family-friendly, free event, to take advantage of the fact that the Blairsville Cruisers will be holding their Cruise-In-On-The-Square earlier that Saturday evening.

want to have all this money sitting there that you can spend and go blow on something that you don't really need or think is a good item for the county," said Commissioner Paris. "So for those reasons, I'm proud of everything we've got and what we've worked for, the fact that we've all worked hard to make our dollars go a long way."

Total 2015 General Fund revenues for the county were up to about \$15.7 million, up from \$14 million in 2014 and \$13.7 million in 2013.

General Fund expenditures have increased only slightly over the past three years, to \$12.7 million in 2015 from \$12.5 million in 2014, and \$12.3 million in 2013.

As for SPLOST funds used in 2015, the county expended \$1.8 million of the 2009 SPLOST and \$6.7 million of the 2015 SPLOST.

"I'm pleased to present that we had an unmodified opinion on the county's financial statements through Dec. 31, 2015," said CPA Pilgrim. "Nothing came to our attention during the audit that would prohibit us from issuing a good, clean opinion on the audit, so we have an unmodified opinion."

At the very beginning of the meeting, Commissioner Paris thanked the Union County Finance Director Robin Gazaway, "for being responsible for getting all the financial information from the county, other than the elected officials, ready for the auditors. This is a huge job and requires a lot of work over several weeks for not only her, but other staff members."

Commissioner Paris will hold a called meeting on Thursday, Aug. 11, at 5 p.m., in the Union County Courthouse in order to set the county's millage rate.

## Mattee...continued from Page 1A



Mountain Movers and Shakers members enjoyed listening to Mattee speak in the Aug. 5 meeting in Young Harris.

also important to aerate," said Mattee. "A lot of your weed problems come from compacted soil, but aerating, whether it's core aeration or just running a spike over it, will help."

"It moves things around a bit to get air flow and helps the roots spread out so your lawn isn't as stressed."

Mattee went on to explain black knot fungus, a disease typically found in fruit-bearing and ornamental trees. Apple and pear trees are especially susceptible to this disease, both of which are common to this region.

Black knot fungus will infect the spring and is best identified by hard, black galls that will callus the tree.

It is essentially a cosmetic disease and will stay contained within the gall. If the galls move towards the trunk of the tree, Mattee recommends calling in an arborist to assess the tree and prevent further damage.

Another tree bacteria to look out for is fire blight. According to Mattee, this disease is a bacterial growth that can attack the exterior and interior structure of a tree.

The bacteria get into the tree through the flowers and can be identified by random brown patches in a tree, at the tip of the branch.

"If you look at an apple tree or pear tree, they're going to have random patches throughout the tree," said Mattee. "It'll be at the tip of the branch. There's a characteristic that we call shepherd's crook. The leaves will actually stay on the tree and won't die and fall off like with most diseases. Instead, they're going to form a hook as everything wilts. It's going to look like it's been burned."

The best management of this disease is to wait to prune until the winter months after the leaves have fallen, to cut off anything that looks

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"I love playing live, I love the interaction and the response you get from the crowd," he said. "I try to play as many of the hits from my era as I possibly can, since that's what the fans come and see me for, and I'll weave a few new things in there, along with some covers from guys that influenced me along the way."

"It probably doesn't mean that much to this newer generation, but I take pride in the fact that what you hear coming out of the P.A. is all live by the guys you see standing on that stage. There are no computer-generated tracks, no computer background vocals. It's just six guys standing on the stage playing the music that you're hearing. It all comes from us, and I don't think you can get that much anymore."

Lawrence will be joined that Friday evening by Jana Kramer. Kramer is relatively new to the Country Music scene, and many may know her from her acting in the hit TV series "One Tree Hill."

Tickets for the 7 p.m. show are on sale now – Level 1 seating costs \$46 plus \$2 handling, and Level 2 seating costs \$36 plus \$2 handling.