

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Great American Eclipse coming Aug. 21; get your glasses

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Great American Eclipse just before 2:35 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 21, you could simply step outside and look up.

But for those wanting a more social connection to go along with the eclipse experience, there are plenty of options to choose from.

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring three viewing parties the day of the eclipse: the Meeks Moon Party at Meeks Park; the Viewing at the IP (Blairsville Industrial Park)

on Airport Industrial Road; and the Totality Tailgate at the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center (schools will be closed for the event).

Each of the chamber sponsored viewing parties will run from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. that Monday, Aug. 21, and will feature music and food trucks. Parking will be free, and eclipse viewing glasses will be available at each location.

Alcohol, weapons and pets are prohibited at all three events.

"This is all for community awareness for the residents," said Chamber Tourism Director Tobie Chandler. "And for all the visitors that are coming, it's a chance for them to see and experience Blairsville, and plan a trip back here later."

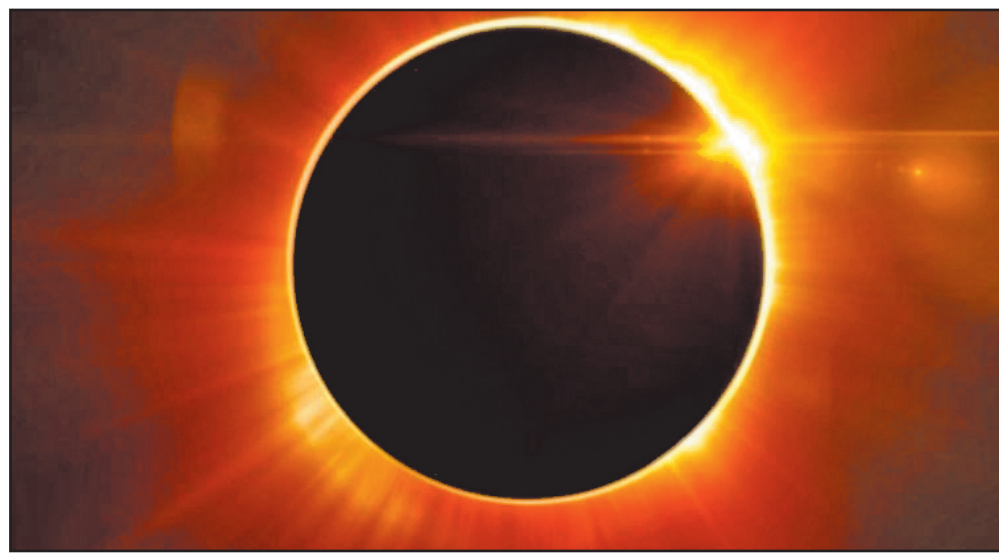
Union County Rotary,

the Blairsville Cruisers, Habitat for Humanity, the Union County Recreation Department, the United Community Bank Junior Board, Union County Schools and Union County Band Boosters are helping to sponsor the various chamber viewing parties.

On Sunday, Aug. 20, the day before the eclipse, the chamber will be hosting an "Astronomy Night" program at the Fine Arts Center, where people can go to learn all about what to expect during the eclipse from astronomer David Hearn.

Astronomy Night tickets are available through the chamber, and are \$3 per person or \$1 with a Union County Schools ID, and the event runs from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Of course, many thousands of visitors are



Total Solar Eclipse

expected to flow into and through Union County for the eclipse, ranging from fellow Georgians out of Atlanta to

eclipse chasers from around the world.

This influx of cars and people will understandably

cause traffic to swell throughout the weekend and into Monday, so to avoid See Eclipse, Page 2A

Chief Dyer on eclipse: 'Be calm, be patient and be careful'

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Unprecedented – that's how first responders are characterizing the upcoming Great American Eclipse.

On top of the 23,000-person summer population of Union County, estimates for the number of additional people expected to be traveling to and through Union County for the eclipse range from 10,000 to several times that many, even if it ends up cloudy or raining.

"We're sort of treating this like a winter storm," said David Dyer, director of the Union County Emergency Management Agency. "Traffic is going to be a concern because, if you're expecting



Pam Hawkins of the Union County Commissioner's Office with Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley in a recent EMA meeting concerning the eclipse. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

that many people coming in here, there are going to be vehicles going everywhere.

"We're thinking

everybody's coming on the weekend. They're going to stay the weekend, going to

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Judge Murphy Miller lifts injunction blocking EMC elections

By Charles Duncan
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Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board Member Charles Jenkins calls it the "biggest screwed up mess" he's ever seen.

At least, that's what he told the Mountain Movers and Shakers on Friday, Aug. 11, at The Sundance Grill in Hiwassee.

The rejection of four candidates from the Annual Election Ballot by the Credentials Committee, resulted in an Enotah Circuit Superior Court judge issuing an injunction to prevent the EMC's September elections from happening.

The Board's Credentials Committee reconvened on

Aug. 3 and reconsidered, allowing Bert Rogers, Preston Cabe, Karen Pirie, and Tommy White to appear on the ballot. The four had been deemed "members not in good standing" because of previously late power payments.

Senior Superior Court Judge Murphy Miller was asked to decide the meaning of "member in good standing," because there wasn't a definition included in the Cooperative's bylaws.

Because the Credentials Committee reversed its previous decision, Judge Miller dismissed the court-ordered injunction on Aug. 7.

Rogers, who felt wronged, pursued the legal action and rightly so, as there is no legal definition of "member



BRMEMC Board Member Charles Jenkins

in good standing."

BRMEMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms said any misunderstanding

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Phillips humbled by winning GAB's Best On-Air Personality

By Charles Duncan
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A humble Steven Phillips said he's still trying to let it soak in that he was selected Best On-Air Personality at the recent 55th annual Georgia Association of Broadcasters award dinner held at Jekyll Island.

Phillips, a radio personality from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. on "Morning Dish," on radio station WJRB 95.1 in Young Harris, said it's hard to believe he took top honors in Jekyll, and took home a GABBY.

"It's hard to believe that in the state of Georgia, they picked me to be the personality of the year," Phillips said. "Just little ole me from Hiwassee, Georgia, with all those folks in the Atlanta area. Winning this

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Steven Phillips at the Gabbys.

GM seeking exit strategy as Cable TV Division loses \$30,000 a month

By Charles Duncan
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Blue Ridge Mountain EMC's Cable Television Division is losing \$30,000 a month, and the Cooperative's General Manager and Board of Directors are seeking an exit strategy from the EMC's agreement with the cable service provider.

The cable TV service contract, which currently provides cable TV services to approximately 1,600 customers for a loss of thousands of dollars each month, was discovered by EMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms.

The contract runs through 2020, Nelms said.

Nelms said it was a problem that had persisted for several years. The agreement dates back to 2010 and was not entered into by the current board of directors, Nelms



BRMEMC General Manager Jeffrey Nelms

said.

"As far as our cable television service, we are no longer taking on any new customers," Nelms said. "We are looking for an exit strategy with our current provider, which is not to say we'll always stay away from TV service, but, not the way as it

stands today.

"We want to give our existing TV customers proper notice, we don't want to be disruptive to them," Nelms said. "We're working to try to partner with a local TV offering. That would be a nice win-win for our membership."

BRMEMC Secretary Roy Perren said the Board of Directors wants to remedy the situation.

"We want to fix this and avoid costing the membership any more money," Perren said. "If we shut it off immediately, then we run some risks. We want to choose the best option to resolve this to avoid costing the membership more money."

The cable services division falls under the broadband division, which is outperforming even the

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Dills retires after 23 years as 911 dispatcher

By Shawn Jarrard
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Denny Dills enjoyed his 23 years as the longest serving Union County 911 dispatcher, and now, he's enjoying retirement.

"It is nice not to have to get up on workdays at 4:30 a.m.," said Dills recently. "It's summertime, so I am staying busy enjoying working outside."

Throughout his career, Dills was known for his great working relationship with all Union County first responders, who knew that when they needed to get down to business, they could count on whoever was at the other end of the

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Union County E-911 Lt. Millie Baxter, 911 Director David Dyer, Denny Dills and Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Seatbelt violation leads to arrest on multiple felonies

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The moral of this story is: Always wear your seatbelt.

A Blairsville man is back behind bars after violating probation for 2013 drug-related crimes, according to Lt. Daren Osborn of the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Gary Dockery, 56, was arrested last week on six felony counts possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, one felony count possession of a firearm during the commission of a crime, and one felony probation violation, according to the sheriff's office.

Previously, Dockery was



Gary Dockery

arrested in 2013 and charged with distributing Lortab and the possession of firearms during the commission of

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