

North Georgia News

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U.S. Sen. David Perdue hopeful for American economy

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

U.S. Sen. David Perdue delivered an important economic message to more than 200 of his fellow Georgians on Thursday, Aug. 24.

He gave the keynote address in the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce's 2017 Power Lunch, which was hosted by North Georgia Technical College and sponsored by Windstream.

Central to the senator's message were three "founding principles" that he believes have made the United States the greatest nation on earth.

The first principle, said Perdue, was economic opportunity for all, which, though not guaranteed, is found in abundance throughout

the United States.

Next, the senator spoke on the importance of fiscal responsibility regarding the federal government.

"If you don't have it, don't spend it, just like you do in your life, just like you do in your business," said Sen. Perdue. "Unfortunately, the federal government, because we're the reserve currency of the world, has figured out how to go and print money, and we do it better than anybody in history."

The third principle, according to Sen. Perdue, is limited government, and he went on to say that every progressive attempt of Big Government to solve big societal problems over the last 100 years has failed.

In making his point, Perdue cited the so-called

"war on poverty," the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Postal Service, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and other federal initiatives and institutions that are running out of money, like Social Security and Medicare.

"But there is good news coming, and I just want to make sure you understand how deep down this rathole we really are," said Sen. Perdue.

The U.S. National Debt is currently right around \$20 trillion dollars, and the federal government is borrowing more money every day to keep up with spending.

With a \$4 trillion annual federal budget that operates at a deficit close to \$500 billion a year, the only direction for the national debt to go is up in its current trajectory.

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U.S. Sen. David Perdue greeting Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley during the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce Power Lunch at North Georgia Tech on Aug. 24. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Board of Education sets millage, purchases new cameras for buses

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Union County Board of Education set its 2017 millage rate to 11.780 mills in its August regular meeting.

As previously reported, the 2017 rate is lower than the 2016 rate, which was 11.787 mills.

However, due to an increase in existing property values and added property since the 2016 tax digest, the schools will be bringing in roughly \$213,000 more in tax revenues this year over last year.

Under the 2016 millage rate, the schools projected to collect \$14,205,828 in 2016 property taxes.

Accepting the 2017 millage rate of 11.780 mills will bring in \$14,418,723.24 in net taxes levied this year



Union County Board of Education Members Janna Akins and Tony Hunter in the Aug. 15 regular meeting. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

toward the system's FY18 budget, or roughly \$213,000 more in tax monies in 2017 than in 2016.

Again, this additional tax revenue for the schools comes from property gains made

within the county, as existing real property values have gone up by about \$750,000, and the county has experienced a net gain of about \$18 million in property values since 2016.

The board also approved

a contract with 24 7 Security Inc. for \$83,647, to provide each bus in the school system's 43-bus fleet with all-HD cameras.

For the price of \$1,742 per bus, the schools will be equipping each of its buses with four inside cameras, one stop-arm camera, GPS capabilities, and a five-year warranty on all equipment.

"First and foremost is safety, for the driver and for the students riding the bus," said Union County Schools Superintendent Dr. Fred Rayfield. "Second is being able to deal with any kind of either discipline situation or controversy between a driver and a kid or a driver and a family."

"Right now, I can't tell you how many hours

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All charges are dismissed against Gail Gowder

By Charles Duncan
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The Enotah Judicial Circuit has dismissed all charges against Gail Nicholson Gowder, District Attorney Jeff Langley said.

"She has provided a sworn affidavit in connection with the case, and based upon that, we have stopped the prosecution of her case at this time," Langley said.

According to Union County Superior Court documents, the state received information/evidence in the matter regarding Gail Nicholson Gowder, wife of Mike Gowder, which would show that she did not have criminal intent when she submitted and received two prescriptions.

"The evidence would show that she did this at the request of Dr. George David Gowder, the former Emergency Room physician at Union General Hospital," Langley said. "She provided a sworn statement regarding David Gowder's request of her to pick up those prescriptions."

The sworn statement given by Gail Gowder explains David Gowder's request of her to pick up the prescriptions in question, Langley said.

"Due to the resolution of her case, she is now subject to being called to testify as a witness against David Gowder," Langley said.

Charges were dismissed via entry of a what is known as a "nolle prosequi" by the district attorney's office, to which the court consented.

Cook, Love qualify for special election; no general election

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
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Mary Ruth Cook and Jonathan Love have both qualified for the vacant Blairsville City Council post once held by Martha Cone.

The two will square off in a Nov. 7 Special Election at Blairsville City Hall.

When Cone passed away in May, she still had more than two years remaining in her term.

When either Cook or

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Mary Ruth Cook



Jonathan Love

Colwell inmate captured by Union, Fannin authorities

By Charles Duncan
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A 33-year-old Carlton H Colwell on Detention Center inmate on a work detail in Towns County stole a pickup truck from the Towns County Courthouse parking lot and led authorities in two counties on a high-speed chase, authorities in Union and Towns counties said.

Brian Jeffrey Bennion, 33, spotted a pickup with Colwell in it parked at the Towns County Courthouse, jumped

in and took off shortly before 11 a.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 22, Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton said.

A Be On the Lookout, or BOLO, was issued for Bennion by Towns County, along with a description of the vehicle, Sheriff Clinton said.

The vehicle belonged to Towns County employee Wade Nicholson, Sheriff Clinton said.

Union County Sheriff's Deputy Shane Burnette was at Red's Country Store off Georgia 325 when the BOLO of a stolen vehicle came over

the police band radio. He turned onto Georgia 515 and headed east toward Blairsville.

He spotted the vehicle in question at B & W Ranch Road, heading west. He turned around and maneuvered through traffic and once again located the vehicle.

"I met a vehicle at B & W Ranch Road that matched the description of the stolen pickup," Deputy Burnette said. "By the time I caught up with him, I was already about two miles into Fannin County.

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Heritage Festival to celebrate 16 years in Union County

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

History comes to life in Union County for the 16th Annual Mountain Heritage Festival during Labor Day Weekend, on Saturday, Sept. 2 and Sunday, Sept. 3.

Celebrating the traditions of the North Georgia Mountains, the festival will be held at the Mountain Life Museum, one block South of the Historic Union County Courthouse, from 10 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., free of charge.

Sponsored and hosted by the Union County Historical Society, the event features life like it used to be, with farm animals, craft exhibits, blacksmithing, butter churning, quilting and other facets of the early life of local settlers.

"We have animals coming, courtesy of the (Union County) FFA, animals to pet and look at," said Libby Stephens, Union County Historical Society President. "We'll have churning and cooking over an open fire in the Payne Cabin. We'll have yarn spinning, quilt making and we may even have some weaving, but we do have a loom."

"Of course, we'll have great music all day long for people to enjoy. We'll also have our arts and crafts both days."

Through all of the exhibits and demonstrations, the Heritage Festival helps tell the history of those who settled and lived in these mountains more than a century ago, giving visitors a glimpse into the daily lives of those who worked the land and built this thriving,

mountain community.

Union County was originally shaped from Cherokee territory during the Georgia Land Lottery of 1832, just before the infamous Trail of Tears. Those who won property during the lottery and moved to Union County were hardworking, self-sufficient folk, determined to prosper in the rugged mountain terrain.

Most of those who packed up their lives and braved the journey through Southern Appalachia came out of the mountains of North Carolina or moved over from Habersham County, though many still were Scottish-Irish settlers trying to rebuild lives in America.

Though originally inhabited by the Cherokee Nation, rumors of gold drew

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A view from the 2016 Heritage Festival. Photo/Lily Avery

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Aug 29 vs. Fannin Co. 6 PM
Aug 31 vs. GAC 6 PM

FOOTBALL

Sept 1 @ Hayesville, NC
7:30 PM

Backyard Beekeeping Hamilton Gardens Sept. 1st

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Fall Cruise-In at Union County Nursing Home Sept. 3rd.

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'Elvis' at Mtn. Home Music Theater Sept. 2nd

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