

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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November 29, 2017

Christmas is coming to Union County on Saturday, Dec. 2

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, and those looking to embrace the holiday spirit out in the community this weekend will have plenty of opportunities thanks to the Union County Historical Society and the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority.

The biggest event this weekend will take place in the heart of Downtown with the annual Christmas Parade on Saturday, Dec. 2, beginning at 6 p.m.

Typically, the parade has been held earlier in the afternoon on the first Saturday of December, but this year,

after much consideration by Downtown Development Authority Program Manager Darren Harper, the parade has been moved to just after dusk, promising a bigger and brighter event than ever before.

"We're going to do a night time parade this year," said Harper. "We'll have pictures with Santa then after the parade we are going to be closing the square for a couple of hours. "We'll have pictures with Santa outside, reindeer games for the kids, Santa's workshop. So, we're lining everything up and getting ready to pull this off. Before, after the parade, people would scatter. So, we're hoping that having it downtown, around the square at night, and have some of the

businesses open, that it'll keep more people downtown even after the parade to enjoy all the festivities."

Before the parade begins, the Union County Courthouse will open its doors for Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus and a few of Santa's elves. Children will have the chance to share their Christmas wishes and have their photo taken with Old St. Nick, from 4 p.m. until 6 p.m., before Santa joins the parade.

Following the parade will be the lighting of the Christmas tree on the lawn of the square, as well as the annual lighting of the luminaries ceremony, hosted by Enotah CASA, in honor and memory of abused

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A memory from the 2016 Blairsville Christmas parade. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Board of education to ask voters to renew ESPLOST in 2018



Union County Fire Chief David Dyer with his B Shift fire crew and Superintendent Dr. Fred Rayfield. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

On May 22, 2018, Union County voters will have a major decision to make – whether to renew the ESPLOST.

In its Nov. 21 regular meeting, the Union County Board of Education voted to accept the parameters of ESPLOST V, paving the way for an ESPLOST referendum to appear on the ballot in

the May 22 General Primary Election.

An ESPLOST (Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) is a 1-penny sales

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Local fitness guru competes in Class of the Carolinas contest

By Lily Avery
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Almost a year ago, Susan Moss Stalcup joined the ranks of proud Marine mothers everywhere as her son made the decision that so many brave men and women do to protect this nation by enlisting in the United States military.

While Stalcup felt the immense sense of pride, like any mother would, she found herself wanting something more to occupy her free time, so she turned to one of the things she has always found solace in: fitness.

"My son joined the Marines last January," said Stalcup. "And I went to Ben (Newell) and I told him I wanted to do a fitness competition. He said, 'you want to do a what?' Then he asked who was going to coach me, and I said he was, and he said he would. He trained me to my first competition."

Stalcup, who is a



Susan Stalcup, a local fitness instructor at Union General Wellness Center, with her own personal trainer, Debbi Yamo, of Young Harris College.

personal trainer at Union General Wellness Center and owner of North Georgia Extreme Boot Camp, began researching, training and learning the ins and outs of what it means to work toward competing. Beginning her training

with Union General Wellness Center Personal Trainer Ben Newell, Stalcup became familiar with the process of not just training for health and fitness, but training for a purpose beyond that, and pushing herself harder than

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Chamber President Regina Allison to depart chamber at end of year

By Shawn Jarrard
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Regina Allison is resigning from her position as President and CEO of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce at the end of this year.

Allison said she is resigning at the end of December so that she can spend more time with her family.

She announced her intention to resign in an email to chamber members on Wednesday, Nov. 22.

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Regina Allison, President & CEO Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Dr. Rayfield to retire; school board tables search for replacement

By Shawn Jarrard
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Union County Schools Superintendent Dr. Fred Rayfield will retire at the end of the 2017-2018 school year, citing "a variety of reasons."

Dr. Rayfield notified the Union County Board of Education during a Nov. 14 board training session that he would be retiring effective June 30, 2018.

Since then, the board has been entertaining options for moving forward.

"We were all saddened by his retirement but wish him well in the future," said

Board Chair Cindy Odom when reached for comment.

In a Nov. 21 work session, the board welcomed Dr. Sandy Addis of superintendent search firm King-Cooper & Associates.

Addis is a familiar face to the board, as he assisted Union County Schools with the 2015 search to find a replacement for then Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe.

Steppe's replacement was Dr. Fred Rayfield, who officially took over as superintendent of the system to start the 2016-2017 school year.

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Dr. Fred Rayfield, Union County Schools Superintendent

Commissioner Paris and Rotary team up for Polio awareness

By Lily Avery
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During the Union County Commission meeting on Thursday, Nov. 15, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris signed a proclamation designating Oct. 24, 2017 as World Polio Day.

Poliomyelitis, or Polio for short, is an extremely crippling and life-threatening infectious disease that is caused by the poliovirus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, the virus spreads from person to person and can invade an infected person's brain and spinal cord, causing paralysis.

While most people, roughly 72 out of 100, who



Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris

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The Beach Boys are headed to Anderson Music Hall on Dec. 1

By Charles Duncan
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The band that launched an entire genre of music known as "surf" is coming to Anderson Music Hall on Friday.

The Beach Boys, one of the most critically acclaimed, commercially successful, and widely influential bands of all time, will play the Hall on Dec. 1, one of the most anticipated music shows in Hiawassee history.

The band continues its decades of music today with longtime bandmates Brian Wilson, Al Jardine, Mike Love, David Marks and Bruce Johnston.

Two of the Wilson brothers (original band



members) passed away many years ago; Dennis drowned in 1983 and Carl died of lung cancer in 1998.

The group had more than 80 songs charted worldwide, 36 as U.S. Top 40 Hits (the most by an American Rock band), and four reaching No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100.

The Beach Boys have sold more than 100 million records worldwide, making them one of the world's best-selling bands of all time, and they are listed at No. 12 on Rolling Stone magazine's 2004 list of the "100 Greatest Artists of All Time."

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