

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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## Ivy Log Creek Bridge could shift lanes by July

By Charles Duncan  
North Georgia News  
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The \$3.57 million construction of a new Ivy Log Creek Bridge could be completed by July, weather permitting, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said Saturday.

Last week, the Georgia Department of Transportation reported that the last five bridge beams were being placed at the construction site on Georgia 11/U.S. 19.

Talley Construction Company of Rossville is doing the work to replace the .474-mile long Ivy Log Creek Bridge.

The total construction cost is \$3.578 million, said GDOT spokesperson Teri Pope.

The target completion date is Dec. 31, Pope said, which includes the demolition of the existing bridge.

The next phase of the



Construction on the \$3.57 million bridge continues. Weather permitting, the new bridge on the Murphy Highway could be complete as early as June, possibly July. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

bridge project will be the construction of a 900-foot concrete retaining wall just past the bridge project as you drive toward Murphy, NC, Paris said.

"There's a high bank on the left as you're driving toward Murphy," Paris said. "The construction crew is hauling that dirt out. As they're working on that bank,

they'll be building the retaining wall.

"It's a different process, they start from the top and build down," Paris said. "They'll build the wall down

as they go down with the dirt. At the highest point, it will be 21 feet high when they're finished. It will taper off on both ends. They couldn't get enough slope on the bank, so they're having to build the wall."

The bridge, built in 1940, was in need of replacement, Paris said.

"It was one of the worst-rated bridges in the state," Paris said. "We're excited to get it replaced before something bad happened. This bridge was in bad condition and we've had it on the GDOT list for sometime."

The contractor has until Dec. 31 to complete the construction. It's very possible it will be completed ahead of schedule.

It's believed the new bridge will be finished by June or July and traffic can be diverted to the new bridge.

At that time, demolition of the old bridge will begin, Paris said.

"We're hoping if that roadway gets on GDOT's projects list for widening, and we think it will, another bridge will be built where the current bridge now sits. It may be 10 years down the road."

It could be sooner. GDOT goes by traffic counts and the new tribal casino in Murphy, NC is slated to open in September 2015.

That factor alone could make traffic counts on Georgia 11/U.S. 19 soar.

"I think the Georgia 515 widening project that goes through Young Harris is set for 2017 and that project will be completed first," Paris said. "It's possible that Georgia 11/U.S. 19 could be on the 2020 calendar."

Emily Dunn, who represents the 9th Congressional District on the State Transportation Board of Directors, which includes Union County, said construction of the Ivy

See *Bridge*, 3A

## City Council approves use of transaction cards

Paying city tickets with debit or credit cards now an option

By Charles Duncan  
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The City of Blairsville Police Department entered the 21st century last week — in terms of collecting traffic fines.

Taking advantage of modern technology, the Blairsville City Council approved a request by the Blairsville Police Department to use Courtware Solutions to allow the department to accept debit and credit cards for purposes of accepting payment of traffic fines.

Cindy Neely, the department's Clerk of Court, told the Council that five of 10 persons trying to pay their fines and court costs request to pay by debit or credit card.

"We have an opportunity to do online payments," Neely said. "This will cost



Mayor Pro-Tem Buddy Moore asks questions about the use of credit and debit cards at last week's Council meeting. Photo/Charles Duncan

us no money. The transaction fee will be charged to the client. For example, if you have a ticket that is \$60 and you choose to pay it online, you

will use your debit or credit card and (Courtware Solutions) will charge you a fee for

See *Payments*, 3A

## Historical Society has big news

By Charles Duncan  
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A blustery Saturday brought big news for the Union County Historical Society's Open House and Fundraiser event on the lawn of the Historic Union County Courthouse.

The Society has purchased the Pat Haralson Law Office from the Downtown Development Authority with plans of restoration to its glory days, said Historical Society President Bud Akins.

"We're going to bring Pat Haralson's desk down from the Courthouse and set it up in the Law Office," Akins said. "It'll look like Pat is out to lunch."

The Law Office will remain in its location just off the corner of the Kings

See *Big News*, 2A



Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley makes the announcement that the Historical Society has purchased the Pat Haralson Law Office. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

## Esposito lives every day with Parkinson's

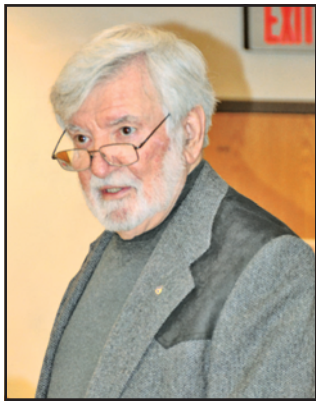
By Charles Duncan  
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In 2006, Chuck Esposito was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease.

Parkinson's has no known cure, and is commonly known as a degenerative disorder of the central nervous system.

The motor symptoms of Parkinson's Disease result from the death of dopamine-generating cells in the region of the midbrain. The cause of this cell death is unknown.

By 2009, Esposito, of Suches, had joined the Blairsville-area Parkinson's Disease



Chuck Esposito

Support group, and has served as the group's elected leader

since December 2011. Esposito says early in the course of the disease, the most obvious symptoms are movement-related. These symptoms include shaking, rigidity, slowness of movement and difficulty walking.

Later, thinking and behavioral problems may arise, with dementia commonly occurring in the advanced stages of the disease, whereas depression is the most common psychiatric symptom.

Other symptoms include sensory, sleep and emotional

See *Esposito*, 2A

## City seeks funds for new terminal

By Charles Duncan  
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The soon-to-be constructed North Terminal at the Blairsville Municipal Airport will be a two-story, 5,000 square-foot facility.

That's the word from Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley as he told council members last week that the city is still working on opportunities for grant dollars to build the terminal.

Some grant dollars already have been secured, while District 51 State Sen. Steve Gooch, (R-Dahlonega) is seeking other funds, Mayor Conley said.

The mayor said he has discussed the city's airport

See *Terminal*, 2A



The soon-to-be completed North Terminal at the Blairsville Municipal Airport will be an economic driver for both Blairsville and Union County, Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley said. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

## Ray Payne remembered by Class of '56

By Charles Duncan  
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Without a doubt, Ray Payne had a green thumb.

Ray's rhododendrons, azaleas, trumpet vines, roses, geraniums, annuals, and perennials made Union County a paradise, Union County Historical Society President Bud Akins told a crowd outside the Historic Union County Courthouse on Saturday.

Akins said people came from miles around to see Ray and Dot Payne's yard.

"They all slowed down to get a glimpse of the beauty that surrounded Ray and Dot's place," Akins said.

Ray Payne's hobby turned into a professional passion in Union County.

For years, Ray and his

See *Ray Payne*, 2A



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**UNION COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS**

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**Golf:**  
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**Woody Gap**

**Tennis:**  
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