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industry in our county. So we try to highlight those people by separating them and setting up a few exhibits throughout the market.

“We want to highlight all aspects of agriculture in the county, and this is one of the major ones we do every year to try to let people know about the importance of this business and shed a little light on those who contribute to it.”

Of the countless vendors at the Farmers Market on Saturday, some of those showcased were Litton Landscaping, English Country Gardens, Payne’s Flowers, Whimsy Flower Farm, Lilah Bowles, Nelson’s Ace Farm and Garden, General Supply, and Buds and Butterflies Nursery.

Marketgoers piled into these vendors’ stalls, trying their best to get the pick of the pile. While some vendors sold fresh cut flowers in singles or bouquets, others offered plants ready for a day of some serious gardening and landscaping.

“We’re selling rhododendrons, azaleas, red azaleas, hydrangeas, shamrocks – they’re all perennials,” said Greg Payne of Payne’s Flowers. “We grow all our own plants in a nursery.”

“We come here every Saturday and have been since the Farmers Market came to be. It’s how we sell all of our crop. It’s a really nice thing.”

No matter what patrons were looking for, there was something to be found for everyone.

While the Ornamental Plant Exhibit was the highlight of the market last weekend, produce vendors and various arts and crafts vendors filled the stalls, lending a little bit of everything for all those in



Glen Henderson of the Mountain Beekeepers’ Association sold honey and shared information about the bees he brought to the market that Saturday. Photo/Lily Avery

attendance.

One vendor in particular, Brasstown General Store from Brasstown, NC, displayed goat’s milk lotions and homemade loose-leaf teas while spreading the word about the General Store for those who might not be familiar with it.

Another vendor, Glen Henderson of the Mountain Beekeepers’ Association, sold both wildflower and sourwood honey, which usually came with an explanation of how the bees gathered pollen to produce the tasty honey patrons bought, aided by a visual from his traveling beehive.

With all the wonderful vendors this year, Manager Cummings is sure this is going to be the best year the market has seen yet.

“Today has been about the same as our opening day last weekend, which was our

biggest day to date,” said Cummings. “We have people parked across the creek again this Saturday, and I’m tickled.”

“We’ve probably had about 3,000 people come through here. More people know about us, and I think we’re getting a lot of tourists and word is spreading. I’m very excited.”

The next big event coming up at the market is a dessert contest on Saturday, June 24. Anyone and everyone can bring the dessert of their choice and take their chance at becoming Union County Farmers Market’s next best baker.

Money will be raised in the contest by market customers voting for their favorite sweet treat with their dollars, and all proceeds will go to the Union County Relay For Life.

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them as healthy as we possibly can.”

Dr. Hilty Burr of Lake Chatuge Animal Hospital came out to support the event, and shared his enthusiasm for the great work McConnell, the Mountain Shelter Board of Directors and the volunteers are doing at the shelter.

“Pet-a-Pet is great because it’s affiliated with the Mountain Shelter Humane Society,” said Dr. Burr. “They do a fantastic job. This shelter, ever since I’ve been here in 2005, has just gotten better and better, and Lisa McConnell is doing a fantastic job.”

“To me, this is as nice of an animal shelter as I’ve ever seen, and I’ve been to many all across the country during my career. What they’re doing today is raising awareness and encouraging people to see the pets and hopefully adopt.”

“There are some wonderful pets in there that need a good home. We’ve helped them in the past with their surgeries, and I really encourage this type of need.”

“Unfortunately, there are a lot of stray pets that need homes, and this is one way for those animals to be placed with a good family.”

Members of the Board of Directors for the Humane Society cooked up hotdogs and hamburgers for event participants, and Lacey from the K-9 Unit of the Union County Sheriff’s Office paid a special visit to the shelter.

“Rescued,” a dog rescue program affiliated with the Georgia Department of Corrections, came out to support the event as well, sharing information on their program and how it benefits both shelter dogs as well as offenders from the Colwell



This lucky pup went home with a loving family during Pet-a-Pet 2016. The Humane Society Mountain Shelter is always looking to supply caring homes with cuddly critters.

Probation Detention Center.

Cornhole and face painting were both available for children, and one lucky kid, 10-year-old Kyra McKechnie, received a \$25 check for her winning essay in the Humane Society Mountain Shelter essay contest.

Kidz Camp will also be offered this summer, beginning Saturday, June 18. The camp will run every Saturday until school starts back, aside from the weekend before July 4.

“We’re introducing the Kidz Camp, kindergarten through sixth grade,” said McConnell. “We teach them humane education in a classroom setting. We teach them how to approach dogs, about preventative care, about

shots, what you don’t do to animals and the importance of properly caring for an animal.”

The Kidz Camp is held in the shelter’s Dawg House, a building dedicated to a wide variety of activities and learning opportunities that are open to the community. During the Kidz Camp, children are given a hands-on education with the help of certified therapy dog Cheree, and her owner Dena Randall.

All in all, the day was a one of laughter and happiness, with smiles all around from everyone involved. Adoptions during Pet-a-Pet were discounted to half-off, and several pets went home to new families.

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felony possession with intent to distribute, according to Lt. Osborn.

Up until last Thursday, the Postal Service and UCSO investigators believed the couple to have been receiving packages of marijuana from out West, though they could not prove that it was indeed marijuana, according to Lt. Osborn.

Then on June 9, the sheriff’s office got the information they needed to obtain a search warrant, according to Lt. Osborn.

“A package was ordered and shipped to a residence in Fannin County where a guy was actually deceased, with instructions of leaving the package in a car,” said Lt. Osborn. “The Postal Service alerted us that the package was on its way. At that time is when the Postal Service came up and we took over. The package was delivered, picked up by an individual and taken to the

house (in Blairsville).”

The Postal Service knew to tip off the Union County Sheriff’s Office because the IP address used to order the suspicious package – as well as past suspicious packages – led back to the Blairsville residence, and it was to that Blairsville address that UCSO investigators followed the individual who picked up the package in Fannin County that Thursday, according to Lt. Osborn.

“At that time, we had a search warrant ready for the residence,” said Lt. Osborn. “We served the search warrant, and it netted about a pound of marijuana. We’re looking at the possibility of seizing vehicles, computers and other assets that were used in the commission of these crimes, in the distribution of marijuana.”

The street value of the confiscated marijuana was about \$3,000, and during the course of the investigation,

Mr. Anderson came forward with the fact that they had been and were intending to sell the marijuana, according to Lt. Osborn.

Ordering marijuana over the internet is “a common thing,” according to Lt. Osborn.

“During the investigation, we’ve received information that larger packages have been received, suspected to be marijuana – and here we’ve got the proof,” said Lt. Osborn.

This bit of investigation in Union County is part of a larger investigation by the U.S. Postal Service, according to Lt. Osborn, and the Postal Service is keeping an eye on suspicious mailing activity within the county.

As always, Sheriff Mack Mason is happy to work in a spirit of cooperation with other law enforcement agencies in order to keep drugs out of Union County, according to Lt. Osborn.