

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Emergency Management

When a disaster strikes most people have the same question, "What do we need to do to get back to normal?" That is the end game of a disaster, getting back to normal. It may take days, weeks, months, even years. When preparing for and responding to disasters, we must consider and utilize the phases of emergency management to efficiently and effectively get back to normal. That is the purpose of the Emergency Management Agency (EMA).

Every county in Georgia has an Emergency Management Agency and a Director. There are a lot of responsibilities placed on that office and the Director. The local EMA office is responsible for all phases of emergency management. The phases are prevention, preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery.

Prevention, preparation, and mitigation are phases where the EMA office is evaluating and planning for a disaster. This is important because the more planning done today, the less there will be to figure out when a disaster happens. But this takes a lot of time and hard work. In prevention, the EMA looks for ways to prevent an incident or disaster from happening. These can include ordinances such as fire and construction codes or general preparedness education.

Preparation can include obtaining needed resources and contacts to be able to respond to a disaster. It can also include training on how to coordinate and respond to incidents. Mitigation is an attempt to eliminate the impact of the disaster or threat. These include programs such as relocating buildings that have a history of continuously being flooded.

Response and Recovery are the two main areas for which most people are familiar. Response is actually responding to the disaster to save lives, save property, and to stabilize the incident. Disasters, by definition, overtax the available resources in the county. This is where mutual aid and contacts are especially important. The recovery phase is for getting things back to normal. The local EMA works with GEMA, FEMA, and other organizations to help get businesses and the people back to their normal lives.

There is a saying about disasters; all disasters are local; they start local and end local. The local Emergency Management

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Answer the Question

"If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be?" Would you answer such a question?

Entertainment critics hit Barbara Walters hard for asking Katharine Hepburn a similar question on the "20/20" show in 1981. But the question wasn't random. Context helps. Hepburn complained that fame had made her into "sort of a thing." Walters asked, "What kind of thing?" Hepburn answered, "I'm like a tree," which elicited the follow up, "What kind of tree are you?"

Jesus used questions not to entertain, but to challenge his hearers to believe who He is. Consider these four questions recorded by John.

"What do you seek?" (John 1:38). Jesus directed this question to Andrew and John. At the time they were followers of John the Baptist who called Jesus "the Lamb of God." Were they looking for a different teacher to follow, or a stimulating religious talk? After spending the day with Jesus, Andrew told his brother Peter, "We have found the Messiah." Maybe the question helps you clarify what, or rather who, you seek.

"You are a teacher in Israel and you do not understand this?" (John 3:10). This was for Nicodemus, when he wondered how someone is born again of the Spirit. Jesus reminded him about Moses lifting the serpent on a pole to save the people. That event foreshadowed the Son of Man dying on the cross "so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life." Do you believe Jesus is God the Son, and His sacrificial death provides for you to be born again to eternal life?

"Do you believe this?" (John 11:26). Jesus asked Martha to believe her brother Lazarus would live again. He made the remarkable claim that "everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die." Do you believe Jesus not only raised Lazarus, but His own Resurrection was the miracle that authenticated everything He said?

"Because you have seen Me, have you believed?" (John 20:29). Thomas had been a doubter, wanting to see the resurrected Jesus for himself. Thomas touched Jesus just to make sure He was real. Then Jesus looked down through history and saw you. "Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed," He

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. What are the main functions of the Union County Fire Department? Do they only fight fires?

A. Many people do not realize the broad impact that firefighters have on various types of emergencies in Union County. The fire department's main responsibility is fighting fire; however, firefighters are called upon for a wide range of emergency situations. You will find them at emergency medical calls, all motor vehicle accidents, hazardous materials incidents, Appalachian trail and mountain hiker searches, and every type of rescue imaginable. Firefighters also have related duties such as training, teaching fire prevention, smoke alarm installations, and equipment maintenance to ensure that the stations, equipment, and apparatus are ready to respond at a moments notice.

Q. What is the difference between the UC Fire Dept vs Emergency Medical Services (EMS-Union General Hospital)?

A. Union County Fire Department is a county department responsible for fighting fire and the other duties listed above. The Emergency Medical Services (EMS), also known as the ambulance service, is operated by Union General Hospital. They respond to all medical calls and are responsible for pre-hospital care for residents and visitors of Union County. As a matter of fact, many people do not realize that of the 3,000 ambulance emergency calls, the Fire Department assists in 1500-1800 of those calls. This includes the treatment and transport of patients.

Q. We hear the term EMA, EMS related to emergency services. Can you explain what the differences are?

A. The EMA is the abbreviation of the Emergency Management Agency. The EMS is the Emergency Medical Services. The EMS is the Union General Hospital ambulance service. The EMA is the organization responsible for the coordinated response of the county resources to natural and manmade disasters. Duties include planning for such emergencies as natural weather events such as flooding, tornadoes, and hurricanes, as well as man-made events such as forest fires, terrorist events, and hazardous material releases. It involves preventing, preparing, mitigating, responding, and recovering from these disasters. The EMA is very important

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

Redistricting Season

Dear Editor,

The census is done, and the redistricting season that occurs every 10 years has begun.

Drawing maps in Georgia is done by whichever party is in charge of the State Legislature. The work is done under a veil of secrecy sanctioned by law. Lacking an open, fair and public process, everyone - no matter what party - has used this opportunity to protect their incumbents, to the detriment of Georgia voters.

The upcoming redistricting will affect our state for the next decade, and voters need to have a say in developing these districts that will be in place until 2030. Communities can have their influence diluted or overly concentrated by map line-drawers interested in partisan gain or pleasing powerful interests.

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"Tackling Lake Issues"

Dear Editor,

This is a response to a letter to the editor that appeared in the May 19, 2021, edition of the newspaper concerning lake issues during a rain-storm. I can confirm the level of trash reported with pictures. From my dock, at the south end of the lake, in 15 minutes, I counted two large trees with branches and roots, cut logs, cut firewood, pruned branches, sticks, limbs, grass clippings, two tables with legs skyward, fragments of a dresser, sections of porch bannisters, numerous wood pallets, two red kayaks, five large staved barrels, flat bottom metal boat with a small motor, siding material, eight to 15 5 gallon plastics gas cans (some with strong smell of gasoline), numerous small and large plastics bottles, garbage bags and so forth.

The debris appeared to be solid to the point that you could walk across the lake. This type of trash appears every rainfall in the winter and spring, at winter pool lake levels. How does this trash accumulate and where does it end up? Some of the plant debris most certainly settles into the lake's sediment, resulting in an organic rich substrate. This probably maintains

See Tornabene, page 5A

Shameful Comments

Dear Editor,

U.S. Rep. Andrew Clyde believes the people who attacked the Capitol on Jan. 6 were acting like "normal tourist." He made his shameful comment May 12, 2021, during congressional hearings. What I saw on TV was anger, destruction and insurrection. He does not represent the views of people I know.

Richard Smith

WWII Generation

Dear Editor,

One night on his show, Johnny Carson's guest was Lee Marvin.

Johnny said, "Lee, I'll bet a lot of people are unaware that you were a Marine in the initial landing at Iwo Jima, and that during the course of that action, you were severely wounded. You were awarded the Navy Cross."

The Navy Cross is the United States military's second-highest decoration awarded for valor in combat. It is awarded primarily to members of the United States Navy, Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard for extraordinary heroism.

"Yeah, yeah... I got shot square in my bottom and they gave me the Cross for securing a hot spot about halfway up Suribachi. Bad thing about getting shot up on a mountain is guys getting shot hauling you down.

"But, Johnny, at Iwo Jima, I served under the bravest man I ever knew. We both got the Cross the same day, but what he did for his Cross made mine look cheap in comparison. That dumb guy actually stood up on Red Beach and directed his troops to move forward and get the hell off the beach. Bullets flying by, with mortar rounds

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Snakes in the Mountains

I usually talk about protecting your home from wildfire, and other natural disasters around us here in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), but there are other risks associated with living in the WUI that we talk about, but seldom take precautions to guard against. How many times have you stuck your hand in a weed choked flowerbed, or walked to the shed out back in the dark without a flashlight, or stepped in brush without looking first.

There are things in those bushes and around buildings that will bite you when you disturb them and make you awful sick, lose a limb, or even worse die. Snakes are all around us up here in the mountains and they usually won't bother you unless you disturb them.

I was standing on the step to our old house here on the farm talking to my mother thru the screen and I felt a bump on my foot. I had been struck by a 4-foot timber rattler that was coiled by the step where people had been walking in and out all day with flip flops and tennis shoes. It was lucky that he hit me on my boot and not one them!

Rapid urbanization and higher-than-normal amounts of rain are a combination that increase the likelihood of human-snake encounters, and more interactions can lead to more bites. People can encounter snakes while walking trails, camping or just doing summer yard-work around the house.

While many Georgians view them as a dangerous pest, they are an important predator of insects and small mammals. Even though most species are non-venomous, the best advice is to avoid contact with any snake. The thing to remember is to never put your hands or feet somewhere you can't see and to use tools like hoes or a shovel to move debris or turn it over so you can see that it's safe to handle.

Because snakes cannot generate their own body heat, they prefer sun and/or stretching out on warm surfaces like rocks, pavement and other heat-absorbing materials while temperatures are cooler. But in the heat of the summer, they prefer shade, especially from the midday sun. People need to take these environmental conditions into account because on a cool morning, you may find a snake sunning a rock along a hiking trail or the stones in a walkway or a paved walking trail. When it's hot, they may be in the shade under a bush or sheet of plywood or in a brush pile.

Venomous snakes typically do not want to use their venom as a defense. They usually give warnings - like rattlesnakes rattling - be-

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RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



R.C. Weeks

I met R.C. Weeks for the first time when I was 4 years old. My Dad's hairstyle was typical of the 1950s and early 1960s. He had a Flat-Topped haircut and he kept mine buzzed. We went once a month to the barber. One particular Saturday we were visiting my grandparents in Alabama. So, we made a visit to the Phil Campbell Barber Shop.

You remember those Barber Shops. There was a revolving candy cane by the front door. Inside there were four chairs, all of which were filled on a typical Saturday. The waiting area was comprised of farmers, all of whom were busy talking about their crops, politics or telling fishing stories. It was a place where the barber used Clubman hair tonic on your fresh haircut and sprinkled talcum powder on your neck after using a small soft-bristled brush to get the hair off the back of your neck. Also, the men would get a hot towel placed on their face to prepare them for a shave.

We were seated in the Barber Shop waiting our turn. Dad got up and walked over to the chair. He told the barber he wanted a Flat Top. When he was through, he placed me on a booster seat and told the barber to give me a Flat Top as well. To this day I can still smell the hair tonic and talcum powder used in that Barber Shop. Both cuts cost us \$2, and when we walked out of the shop, we looked like actors off the set of Happy Days. Before going home, we went over to the Phil Campbell Pool Room.

Dad bought me a pack of peanuts which he opened and poured into a bottle of Grape Nehi. We referred to this soft drink as a grape belly wash. Anyway, I was in heaven. This was good stuff. While I was enjoying this treat, Dad began to shoot a round of pool. He had played a game or two with some friends when another man walked up to the pool table. This other man was R. C. Weeks. He had married my father's first cousin, Polly.

The two men slapped each other's backs and talked a few minutes, and everything seemed cordial to me. But then as he placed a cigarette in his mouth he began insulting my Dad. Now, understand that he was joking with my father. But how is a 5-year-old boy supposed to know that an insult was actually a joke?

As he brought the lighter toward the cigarette another insult came from his mouth. I stood up and walked over toward him. I remember doubling my hand into a fist. Then as he began to inhale on that Lucky Strike cigarette, I punched that rude man as hard as I could swing.

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Backyard Laying Hens

Backyard laying hens are a fun and rewarding project for youth as well as grown folks. They eat many insects in the place they roam, their composted manure is a great soil amendment for home gardening, and the typical backyard breed will lay between 3 and 5 eggs per week if properly taken care of.

Good egg production begins with a solid diet for your hens. They require protein, starch, and fiber in adequate amounts to produce all the components of the egg. Other important ingredients to consider are grit, which aids in digestion; calcium, which is the major component in eggshells; and tender greens such as grass or weeds, which give the hen minerals and are a good source of fiber. A good layer feed has (depending on the brand) 16% to 25% protein and supplies loads of starch, a fair amount of grit, and many minerals the hen needs. Although layer feed can be given to hens without any supplements, the backyard chicken keeper usually gets better results by supplementing layer feed with ground oyster shells (both calcium and grit), adding an electrolyte solution (such as Sav-A-Chick) to their water in hot weather, and letting them free-range for at least part of the day to eat both insects and greenery.

Pullets purchased this spring are not likely to lay eggs until next spring or possibly later next fall depending on the weather. To get good production from your hens, they need at least 12 hours of daylight for their ovaries to begin working. Later in fall, through winter and early in spring, days are much shorter than this. In nature, if the chicken was raising a clutch of chicks, it would be harder to keep them alive in the winter months. She uses this to her advantage when living in cold places, not only to hatch more chicks but also to save her the energy of keeping them warm even in the cold. If the chicken keeper wants to make them lay through winter, all they have to do is add a light in the coop, and set it on a timer beginning at 4:00 in the morning. This extends the typical 10-hour daylight cycle to 14 hours, which is plenty of light for the hens. For practical purposes, this does not really hurt the hen, as long as she is getting a good diet and a place to sleep free of drafts, to reduce strain on her. And although she may produce less eggs than in the summer, she will still usually lay 2-4 eggs per week. A few things to consider are to collect eggs before they freeze (as the hen leaves the nest, they get cold), turn the light on in the morning instead of the evening, and be sure their nest is in a draft-free place in the coop away from feed and water sources, as the commotion

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



We just celebrated Memorial Day which honors all those who have died in the nation's wars. We owe a debt of gratitude to all who gave the ultimate sacrifice for this nation to give us the freedoms we enjoy today. We also need to give thanks each and every day for those that are currently serving and those who have served to defend those freedoms. Please be sure to thank our veterans, active military and first responders every chance you get for their service.

This week is a busy week for the Chamber as we look forward to Business After Hours at Kennedy Creek Resort this Friday June 4th. We are looking forward too spending the evening with fellow Chamber members while we enjoy the hospitality of the great folks at Kennedy Creek. This should be a great networking opportunity at a fabulous venue. Remember, you must have reservations to attend this event.

A perfect way to start your weekend is a

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North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Website: www.nganews.com • Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com • Mail: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

The North Georgia News is an independent and nonpartisan publication. As such, third-party views contained herein are not necessarily the opinions or positions of this newspaper, e.g. advertising, press releases, editorial content, perspectives expressed in articles covering local events, etc.

Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - One Year \$40. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$5. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 17, 1988, at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. Phone: 706-745-6343 Fax: 706-745-1830 * P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514

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to the stability of any county in planning and recovery from disasters.

Q. How do public safety agencies get dispatched to emergency calls?

A. When you call the E911 to report an emergency, the call is processed by the dispatcher. The dispatcher determines the nature of the emergency and determines which units need to respond.

The appropriate units (whether it be law enforcement, fire, or ambulance) are dispatched on their dedicated digital radio frequencies.

The dispatcher and responding units are in constant communication throughout the entire call – ensuring the responders are safe, updating the responding units on developments, and ensuring required resources are made available.

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

I was not tall enough to hit an adult above the waist. But you can imagine where my punch landed. I don't know if he was more embarrassed or if he was really in a lot of pain, but as he bent over in what appeared to be pain, the man came face to face with me. I grabbed him by the nose and said, "Nobody talks bad about my Daddy." The young men in the pool room erupted into laughter.

For years I was the talk of the town. I was referred to as the "young'un that brought R.C. to his knees."

R.C. and Polly Weeks were good people. Later in life they gave me my first job. I served as a stock boy in their clothing store.

Although I never apologized to R.C., I am sure he forgave me for my violence on that day in 1962.

Lasris... continued from Page 4A

At a minimum, the House and Senate apportionment committees should:

Do all the work in public, share all data used, and release proposed maps well in advance of their adoption for public comment;

Draw maps based on community input given at open public hearings across the state;

Commit to using independent, non-partisan benchmarks to prevent partisan bias.

The non-partisan Fair Districts GA has resources on their website, fairdistrictsga.

org, to educate citizens about redistricting, and opportunities for involvement to encourage legislators to ensure that the process is fair and transparent.

It is important to contact Senator Steve Gooch, steve.gooch@senate.ga.gov, and ask him to guarantee a transparent, fair, and open process as they redraw Georgia's maps. Also, find out when there will be a meeting for you to be informed about the possible changes to your area and be sure to attend.

Mary Lasris

Tornabene... continued from Page 4A

the food source, seasoned with the organics from Blairsville's waste treatment plant, for the eventual growth of the anaerobic bacteria that produce the widespread gas bubbles coming up from the lake's sediment in this area. With time, this type of debris and gas bubbles will start appearing much further downstream.

The situation at the south end of the lake, from Highway 515 to Nottely Marina, is about to get worse. This part of the mainstream of the lake is narrow and shallow. It also has the fastest growing shoreline population density and lake pollution levels (www.lakenottely.org). Currently, there is no monitoring program for measuring the health of the lake at the south end.

Ideas were requested in

the letter "Tackling Lake Issues." As a start, I propose that a special committee be formed, preferably by the office of the Commissioner of Union County, to be administrated through one of its Departments (Health?). The committee should consist primarily of volunteers from the enormously talented community of engineers, scientists, conservationists, businessmen and lawyers who have homes in Union County.

The charge to the committee could be: 1. Conduct a critical evaluation of Lake Nottely and its surroundings; 2. Expand awareness of environmental issues and; 3. Create the opportunity for citizens to take an active role in making a cleaner Lake Nottely.

Thomas G. Tornabene

Riley... continued from Page 4A

fore they strike. A snake strikes because it views you as a threat, and producing venom is an energetically costly process, and they only have so much. If they use it, they must make more to hunt for food, and they have to work for every single meal, so striking to defend themselves is something they would rather avoid.

There are two things homeowners can do to reduce the likelihood of snakes hanging around a location – remove potential shelter and food. It's best to take the habitat approach and remove the things that attract snakes like cutting the grass, removing brush and debris, and trimming the lower branches on bushes and trees will go a long way in reducing the places a snake might want to hide. Reducing hiding spots for snakes will also reduce hiding spots for the prey they seek, like rats and mice.

Cleaning around the house and other structures to remove trash, which is shelter for small prey animals, also helps keep snakes away. Teach children not to reach inside crevices and under bushes with low-hanging limbs. They need to know they shouldn't reach into a place if they can't see what might be in there.

Homeowners should also take precautions to reduce the chance of their pet encountering a snake, such as having them on a leash during walks. Common non-venomous species include garter snakes, which people also refer to as garden snakes; rat snakes, also known as chicken snakes; and bull snakes, these snakes are helpful and need to be left alone. King snakes found in South Georgia will attack and kill a rattlesnake. Common venomous snakes here in the Georgia include eastern diamond-backed rattlers, timber rattlers, copperheads and the cottonmouth, also known as the water moccasin.

Most snake bites to humans occur to the feet/lower leg or the hands. Despite common misconceptions on how to deal with a venomous snake bite, it's best to stay calm (yeah right!) and get to a hospital as quickly as possible. There was a snake bite on a hiker on the Appalachian trail last week and the victim was evacuated by

helicopter to a hospital.

First thing to do is to try to identify the snake species. This is especially important for the emergency room doctors to know what it was so they will know how to treat the bite. They just need a decent description of the snake or take a photo of it with your cell phone if it's safe to do so. If someone else tries to get the snake, you run the risk that the doctor may be dealing with two snakebite victims. The victim should remove clothing like socks if bitten on the foot and items like rings on fingers if bitten on the hand because of swelling.

Tourniquets and suction devices or using other mythologized methods to remove snake venom could do more harm than good. Hospitals have anti-venom on hand to deal with bites. Just focus on getting to the hospital quickly but safely.

Fowler...

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said. You have yet to see Him, but still you believe?

You can ignore a question. Hepburn might have dismissed Walters' question as too metaphorical. (She didn't. She saw herself as a "white oak tree, strong and great.") Maybe the source of the question gives you pause. "May I take your pulse?" would be OK coming from your doctor, but weird from a co-worker. But when God takes on human flesh to read some questions into the historical record, they aren't metaphorical or weird. They're vital because of the Questioner and the question. So, give Him your answers.

Dyer...

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Agencies have the responsibility of dealing with the disaster from the beginning to the end. They must constantly work to prevent, prepare, mitigate, respond, and recover from disasters. The main goal of Union County Emergency Management Agency is to have a resilient and prepared community through our efforts.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Mitchell... continued from Page 4A

landing everywhere, and he stood there as the main target of gunfire so that he could get his men to safety. He did this on more than one occasion because his men's safety was more important than his own life.

"That Sergeant and I have been lifelong friends. When they brought me off Suribachi, we passed the Sergeant. He lit a smoke and passed it to me, lying on my belly on the litter, and said, 'Where'd they get you, Lee?' (And I said) 'Well, Bob... If you make it home before me, tell Mom to sell the out-house!'"

"Johnny, I'm not lying, that Sergeant was the bravest man I ever knew. The Sergeant's name was Bob Keeshan. You and the world knew him as Captain Kangaroo."

Keeshan also played Clarabell the Clown on the Howdy Doody program. He passed on Jan. 23, 2004. He was 74 years of age.

Then, there was this gentle, quiet, soft-spoken, slight man on PBS.

Fred McFeely Rogers was another of those people whom you would least suspect of being anything but what he portrayed to our youth. He was a U.S. Navy SEAL, combat-proven in Vietnam with over 25 confirmed kills to his name. He was a master in small arms and hand-to-hand combat, able to disarm or kill in a heartbeat.

After the war, Fred Rogers became an ordained Presbyterian minister and a pacifist. Vowing to never again harm another human, he also dedicated the rest of his life to trying to help lead children on the right path in life.

He wore a long-sleeve sweater on TV to cover the many tattoos on his forearms and biceps, but he won our children's hearts with his quiet wit and charm.

Mr. Rogers passed on Feb. 27, 2003. He was 74 years of age.

Pick an actor from the World War II Generation, and chances are that he wore an American uniform, was usually in combat.

My Dad used to say, "You can't tell a book by its cover."

Williams...

continued from Page 4A

of feeding can deter them from laying there. In addition, if you use red heat lamps instead of white bulbs, they will not have this effect on hens, as red light is not seen as daylight by the hen.

If you have questions about laying hens contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Chamber...

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trip to the Union County Farmers Market. What a great way to spend Saturday morning and get your fresh produce to complete the menu for the upcoming week. Come early and enjoy the official opening of this year's market!

Buy Local Extravaganza is next week so if you are a business owner and have not signed up, you are missing out on a great opportunity to promote your business. This year the event will host more businesses than before. The move to the new Sports Complex will allow for more tables and more vendors. Call the Chamber office to see if you can still get a table or plan to come and explore what our local vendors have to offer. We will also have fun activities for the kids so plan to come enjoy the fun!

Don't forget to go to the Chamber's website and check out the Community Calendar for all the upcoming activities or follow us on Facebook.

What a great time to be in the Mountains, and remember it's better in Blairsville.

Free GED Classes available

Is not having a high school diploma holding you back? This is a great time to earn your GED or HISET certificate. We also offer Accuplacer remedial help and college preparation. Classes are conveniently held in Blairsville through North Georgia Technical College adjacent to the Union County Public Library.

Call today and schedule your appointment to register for our free classes. Our program will begin in July. We offer day, evening, and online learning opportunities. Call Victoria at 706-439-6342 to register.