

# North Georgia News

4 Sections 24 Pages

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Wednesday, May 11, 2022

## National Day of Prayer showcases faith, awareness

By Mark Smith  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The National Day of Prayer was instituted in 1952 by a joint resolution in the United States Congress and signed into law by President Harry S. Truman. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan designated the first Thursday in May of each year as the official observance.

On May 5, the first Thursday in May of 2022, First Baptist Church of Blairsville hosted a regional Day of Prayer program at 5 p.m. that was open to all people, not just in Union County, but all the surrounding counties as well.

As a concession to COVID concerns, the ceremony was both live-streamed and broadcast over the radio.

Following a welcome and invocation by First Baptist Associate Pastor Derrick Hartley, Dr. Al Haywood of Pathway Counseling sang a moving rendition of The Lord's Prayer, accompanied by First Baptist Minister of Music Ed Lawrie.

For people who have never heard The Lord's Prayer put to music before, it was truly beautiful.

Pastor Dave Wesche of All Saints Lutheran Church offered up a prayer of thanksgiving to begin the program, and a silent prayer for the nation.

In years past, the various prayers for the nation were all led by pastors. This year, Enotah Judicial District Attorney Jeff Circuit led the prayer for the nation's governments.

Union County Sole

Commissioner Lamar Paris, Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason, Union County Fire Chief and EMA Director David Dyer, and Blairsville Police Officer C.J. Townsend stood by as Langley delivered the prayer.

Referring to the Book of Exodus, Langley said that God instructed Moses to choose "men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain" to be leaders.

"The New Testament told us to pray for those in authority over us, that we might lead a tranquil and quiet life in Godliness and dignity," Langley said. "That's what we need of our government. That's what we ask of our leaders."

"They are ministers of God, given the sword so that those who do evil will fear, and

that we may have an orderly and just society. And that's what we're praying for," he said, then began his prayer.

Though all the prayers were heartfelt, Dr. Haywood's prayer for the families of the nation stood out.

"The things that go on in families nowadays would really shock you," Haywood said before beginning his prayer. "There is so much brokenness. There's so much heartache. There's so much disfunction."

"I heard one time that, 'As the father, goes the family. As the family, goes the church. As the church, goes our nation.' So, guys, as the fathers, that puts us at the forefront. That puts us at an area of responsibility."

"Now, the scripture also says that He will turn the hearts  
See Nat'l Day of Prayer, Page 6A



Commissioner Lamar Paris, Fire Chief David Dyer, Blairsville Police Officer C.J. Townsend, Mayor Jim Conley and Sheriff Mack Mason occupied the stage as District Attorney Jeff Langley prayed over the nation's governments May 5. Photo by Mark Smith

## Range construction meeting attracts multiple contractors



County officials led a May 5 pre-construction meeting for the soon-to-be built Union County Gun Range. Photo by Mark Smith

By Mark Smith  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Eight contractors attended the Union County Gun Range pre-construction

meeting held in a conference room of the new Union County Sports Center on May 5.

The first round of proposals from the fall of 2021 resulted in only a single bid, which was significantly higher

than projected costs due largely to inflation and supply chain disruptions.

Cost estimates have since been recalculated and the county has also received  
See Gun Range, Page 2A

## Union County High receives Military Flagship Banner

By Mark Smith  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

On Friday, May 6, Georgia State School Superintendent Richard Woods visited Union County High to recognize the school as a Georgia Military Flagship School for 2022, presenting district and school leadership with a special banner commemorating the designation.

According to the Military Flagship School Award page on the Georgia Department of Education website, "Schools are chosen through a yearly application process that is open to every school in the state."

Applications are reviewed by members of the independent third-party organization Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission.

"The Military Flagship Award is one of our newest awards here at the Georgia



Richard Woods and Rachale LaVoie traveled from the Georgia Department of Education last week to present Union County High School with a patriotic award. Photo by Mark Smith

Department of Education," Woods said. "It's designed to recognize districts and schools that are going above and beyond to support our military  
See Military Flagship, Page 6A

## Community cookout fills bellies, restores souls at Meeks

By Brittany Holbrooks  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Clayton Reeves said it was four years ago that the Lord asked him to hold a community barbecue.

He put the event off until this year, deciding that if the pavilion at Meeks Park was open on Mother's Day weekend, Full Throttle Ministries would be there to serve food and the Gospel.

Sure enough, despite the rain, there were about 500 or so people who showed up on May 7 for the get-together in the lower area of the park, which ended up meaning so much more than a free pork dinner. Shortly after 4 p.m.,

Reeves took to the gazebo to introduce Brandon Matheson, lead pastor of Catalyst Church in Hayesville, North Carolina. Matheson was to bless the food, but before doing so, he wanted to deliver God's Word to anyone needing to hear it.

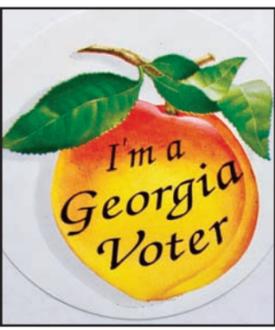
Reeves had gently asked the audience to listen closely, but it didn't seem that the reminder was necessary. All eyes were on Matheson, and some especially moved souls shouted their praises, encouraging him as he ministered.

"I wonder, who was I sent here today to tell (the Gospel)?" Matheson asked. "I wonder if there's a mama here, that you have never had a time in your life where you  
See Community Cookout, Page 3A



L-R: Felicia Hardy, Debbie Fuller, Ben Reeves, Dakota Reeves, Clayton Reeves, Joey Green, Troy Tumlin, Becky Tumlin, Sarah Clay, Shane Clay and Rebecca Walker during the May 7 free Community Cookout by Full Throttle Ministries. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

## Early voting now in second week, continues thru May 20



By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

This week is the second of three full weeks of advanced in-person voting for the General Primary Election and Nonpartisan General Election, taking place in the Jury Assembly Room of the Union County Courthouse weekdays through Friday, May 20.

About 1,070 voters cast ballots through the first week

of early voting, including a slow day of weekend voting Saturday, May 7. With just under 20,000 active registered voters, a little more than 5% of the Union County electorate voted during the first week of early voting.

In addition to in-person ballot casting, by the end of last week, 72 people had returned absentee-by-mail ballots of 260 requested. The last day to request an absentee-by-mail ballot is Friday, May 13, with

all applications needing to be in the Registrar's Office by close of business day.

People too busy to cast in-person ballots during the three weeks of weekday early voting still have one more chance to participate in weekend early voting this Saturday, May 14. All early voting hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the courthouse, even during lunchtime.

Election Day voting for both the General Primary

and the Nonpartisan General Election will take place Tuesday, May 24, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the 11 pre-assigned precincts of Union County.

Appearing alongside candidates on the May 24 ballot will be the Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax continuation referendum.

Union County voters will be asked to support or reject the continuation of ESPLOST, a countywide 1-cent sales and use tax levied on purchases of

local goods in support of the Union County School System.

For more than two decades, Union Countyans have supported ESPLOST for use by local schools to build new facilities, upgrade existing facilities, renovate HVAC systems, add to aging bus fleets, update technology and more.

Should voters approve the measure once more, the local sales tax will remain at  
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**SPORTS**

Track: State Championship  
5/12-14 @ Columbus

Golf: Girls State Championship  
5/16-17 @ Warner Robins

**Fire Station 4**

**OPEN HOUSE**

**May 14**

see page 4B

**Woody Gap Band of Steel**

**"PAN ROCKS" Concert**

**May 14**

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# Gun Range...from Page 1A

approval for increased federal funding, so a new Request for Proposal was released on April 20 and the pre-proposal meeting was set.

The Request for Proposal, including project specifications and drawings, can be found at <http://www.unioncountyga.gov/government/commissioners-office/purchasing/>.

Union County SPLOST Manager Kevin Hamby led the May 5 meeting with assistance from Alan Wieczynski of Breedlove Land Planning, Inc., the engineering firm that designed the proposed Gun Range.

County Manager Larry Garrett and County Purchasing Director Pam Hawkins were there to answer questions and support Hamby and Wieczynski, and the meeting began with Hamby outlining the mechanics of the RFP.

"Generally speaking, this will not be a low-bid job," Hamby said. "This will be a cost proposal, and the award will be to the best, most responsive bidder."

Wieczynski gave a brief overview of the Gun Range project, stating that it will involve a 7.12-acre disturbance of U.S. Forest Service land, and

he described the scope of the project and mentioned things not to include in the contractor bids.

Hamby added, with emphasis, that timber cut at the site is owned by the Department of Natural Resources and will have to be appraised and paid for before it can be removed. He also said that extra care must be taken when constructing the access road, as it crosses a trout stream buffer.

Four commercial construction general contractors were represented at the meeting: Carroll Daniel Construction of Atlanta; Charles Black Construction Company of Cleveland; Milestone Construction of Athens and Augusta; and Astra

Construction of Saudi Arabia.

Carroll Daniel, Charles Black and Milestone Construction are all based in Georgia. Short for Arab Supply and Trading Company, Astra is "100% Arab owned and managed," according to the company website.

Four specialty construction contractors also attended the meeting.

SERD Construction of Fayetteville specializes in commercial roof decks and engineered fill. SERD stands for Southeast Roof Decks.

Colwell Construction Company of Blairsville and Colditz Trucking of Blairsville specialize in grading and paving, while Ricky Rich Backhoe and Grading of Blairsville specializes in grading and concrete work.

The deadline for proposal

submissions is May 24 at 4 p.m. All questions concerning the RFP must be submitted in writing by May 12.

Concerning the timeframe for awarding the contract, Hamby said the award would be announced in the June 16 meeting of Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and that the Notice to Proceed would be issued a couple of weeks after that.

"This is an extremely worthwhile project in my opinion," Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said, "because of the shape that this country has gotten into."

"It's gotten very dangerous in a lot of places. We see it every day. People, hopefully, will be able to take young kids up there, teach them to shoot. People will be able to target shoot, to learn skills with a firearm, how to protect themselves."

# Early Voting...from Page 1A

its current 7% rate.

All voters will need to have an acceptable form of identification to cast ballots, such as a government-issued driver's license or identification card.

Voters looking to mail their ballots may pick up the two-sided "Application for Georgia Official Absentee Ballot" from the Union County Registrar's Office located at 65 Courthouse Street in Blairsville or print one by accessing the "My Voter Page" at <https://mvp.sos.ga.gov/>.

The "My Voter Page" website contains other valuable information, such as registration status, precinct information, downloadable

sample ballots featuring all candidates up for election and political party questions, mailed absentee ballot status and voter participation history.

"Absentee ballots may be requested any time between 78 and 11 calendar days prior to Election Day," per [georgia.gov](http://georgia.gov). Absentee ballot applications can be returned by mail, fax, email as an attachment, or in-person to the Registrar's Office, again, no later than Friday, May 13.

People who have voted absentee-by-mail in the past will need to submit a new application this election cycle if they want to receive an absentee ballot in the mail.

Voters are encouraged to request and return their

absentee ballots early to give their ballot "enough time to travel through the mail and resolve any issues that may arise when voting by absentee ballot," per [georgia.gov](http://georgia.gov).

Folks wanting to utilize the official drop box to turn in their absentee ballots can find it in the Jury Assembly Room during early voting hours. Voters may also drop completed absentee ballots off at the Registrar's Office through 7 p.m. on Election Day.

April 25 was the voter registration deadline to participate in the May 24 elections.

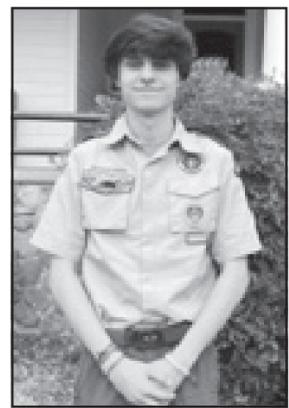
The 2022 General Election will be held on Nov. 8 and will feature the election of political party candidates who clear the primary round of voting this month.

# Mountain Life Museum Landscaping Project

By Mickey Cummings

Cole Montgomery is a part of the Blairsville Boy Scout Troop 101. He has been involved with Scouting for 6 years and is about to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout. A part of this achievement is tied to a public service project. And the public service project Cole has chosen is to work with Marta Meade to renovate the landscape at the Mountain Life Museum.

I met with Cole and Marta at the Museum in early spring to discuss what could be accomplished. He is very enthusiastic and he along with his Dad and other scouts have shown up to install plants under the supervision of Marta.



Cole Montgomery

Cole says he is very excited about giving back to the community through this beau-

tification project. Cole and his volunteers will install new planter beds along with trees around the building. Also, he said that these plants will be a huge improvement for the Union County Historical Society and will welcome people to come and learn about the history of Union County.

We at the Historical Society also think this project will be a huge improvement to the grounds at the Mountain Life Museum. We also wish to ask you if you would be willing to help us by making a donation toward the project please come by the Union County Historical Society at the Old Courthouse and see Patsy in the front office.

# Lake Nottely Improvement Association conducts Nottely Clean Sweep for 2022

The Lake Nottely Improvement Association conducted its bi-annual litter clean-up in Lake Nottely on April 23.

Good weather, 20 volunteers, 5 boats and the debut of LNIA'S debris pontoon, N.A.D.A., made for a productive day. This Spring's clean-up included the Nottely River, Canal Lake, Deaver Ramp area and Poteete Campground shoreline. More areas could have been covered with a larger turnout of volunteers.

This year, more tires, free floating docks, styrofoam, fisherman debris like chairs, tobacco tins, fishing line were noted. LNIA and NADA worked during the winter to pull out as much large debris as possible, but it still keeps coming.

We recommend that all boaters carry a trash bag every time they go out for your personal trash, cans, bottles, etc. Just getting the personal litter out of the lake would be a tremendous help to those of us who care enough to pick up after irresponsible litterers.

Our main focus can turn to larger pieces, logs, especially, now that we have the pontoon with a wench. Nan McMahan, was taking her normal Sunday morning jet ski ride with her dad in 2019 on lake Wedowee when he hit an underwater log and they collided. Jim McMahan died and Nan lost her leg and crushed her pelvis. Accidents like this are preventable.

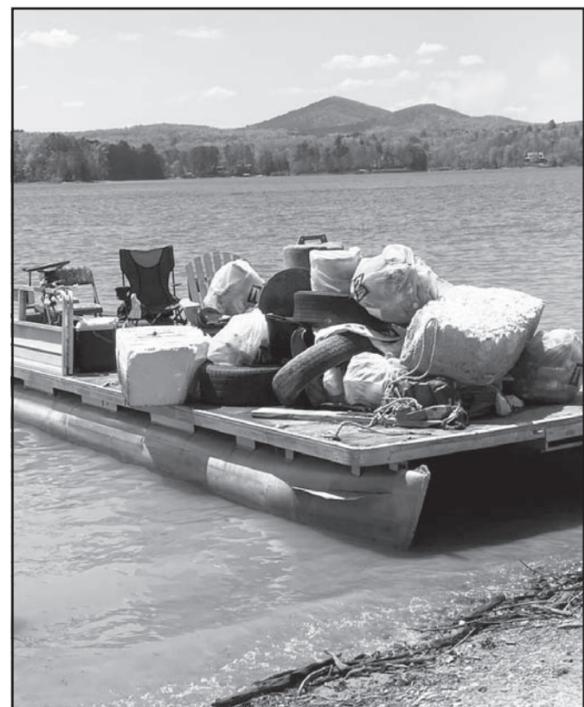
Burning large pieces when the lake is down and not dropping trees that you cut down into the lake are two good solutions. Lake homeowners have been working on this. Another solution is tying a colorful styrofoam 'noodle' to large pieces, NADA will be alerted.

Due to the high cost of fuel, several LNIA members donated gas money for the clean-up. Linda and Jim McAfee, Carole and Doy Lively, Bev Cardell and Cozy Cove Realty assisted with filling our tanks.

Union County and the County Road Department have always supplied us with a dumpster and TVA with supplies.



Volunteers removing trash



LNIA'S debris pontoon

Nottely Marina and Shores and Moor, Corporate Sponsors, are invaluable on Clean Sweep Day. Thanks to all.

Memorial Day is approaching. Keeping the lake clean is a responsibility, littering is never an option!

# Community Cookout...from Page 1A

accepted Christ as your savior and believed in His name.

"I wonder if there's a daddy here, you got little kids running around that's going to eat barbecue in a second, but you have never had a time in your life where you bowed the knee of your heart and said, 'Jesus, I don't know you. I've never been born again and I want it, and I call out to You.'"

Matheson transitioned to telling the story of Adam and Eve, saying he felt led to tell the well-known story that evening. In his recounting, he focused on how the world's first people felt and behaved after committing the world's first sin.

"Sin robs of us our innocence," Matheson said. "It lets us know right from wrong . . . But you know what else it does? You know how you know when you're dead spiritually? You know you're naked and you try to cover it somehow."

This led into the most important part of the event. As Matheson held a prayer before blessing the food, he gave folks the opportunity to accept Jesus into their hearts.

"Can I tell you something? God doesn't hate you. Can I tell you something else? There ain't nothing you've ever done in your life that's too big or too bad to make God stop loving you," Matheson said. "How many have done bad in your life?"

Just about all hands went up, and as Matheson continued to guide them in prayer, he asked for those who did not know Jesus to raise their hands again. This time, with heads bowed and eyes closed for anonymity, there was no way for the impromptu flock to bring judgment upon itself.

As it turned out, there were five such hands raised, though none but Pastor Matheson knew their faces, and with the power of prayer, he led their troubled souls to Jesus, whether they were being introduced to Him for the first time that day or returning after straying away.

Afterward, upon the blessing of the meal, the newly saved blended seamlessly into the crowd, allowing themselves to be surrounded by love.

At that point, everyone's focus shifted to the dinner table toward the front of the pavilion.

One tray held fresh-grilled, tender pork beside a massive stack of hamburger buns.

Folks were able to take second helpings, with Reeves having prepared 315 pounds of pork butt and 30 pounds of a whole hog. Alongside the carnivorous goodies were slaw and dozens of different kinds of chips.

Of particular popularity was Reeves' baked beans featuring pineapple chunks. More than a few participants were seen gathering up spoonfuls to take back home with them, and Sarah Clay was shocked to find that the combination turned out well.

"I'd never think to add pineapple to baked beans, but you know what? It's good," noted Clay after her meal. She and her husband knew Reeves from his last-minute help at their wedding after their caterer's sudden passing, and the couple drove two hours to come see him again.

But to Clay, the best part about Full Throttle's event was its importance to the soul.

"I just got to be around a lot of people I care about – some new people I also care about – and it's just a testament of what I feel like God is doing in my own life," Clay said. "And I'm seeing Him move in other peoples' lives at this event."

Joey Green, who performed bluegrass and gospel music until grabbing his own plate, was there with friends, family, and even the spotted, humorously bovinesque service poodle, Glory Hallelujah.

Green stayed busy for most of the event and beyond, shaking hands and helping pack up instruments. His parents, Joyce and Dean Green, voiced that they were incredibly proud of him for the long journey he had endured in life, to include years of past substance abuse.

"We would go for months at a time not knowing where he was, and you didn't know if he was dead or alive," recalled Joyce, with Dean adding that their son had struggled for three decades with a hard drug addiction.

"He's got a good personality (that) people like," Joyce said of her son, mentioning how that personality had shone through to touch other people while he was in rehab.

"Joey was homeless and rededicated his life to the Lord, gave his life to the Lord, and now he travels all over the country doing this," Reeves said about Joey and his music. "He's great, man. He's great."

Altogether, the barbecue was a smoky, smashing success on both a physical and a spiritual level, as those who attended walked away with full bellies and restored souls. And Reeves was pleased to see such a hunger for the Word of God.

"I thought, you know, there's a lot of people moving here and a lot of people that don't know anybody else," Reeves said. "And what a way to bring people together and love on people and remind them of Christ's love and forgiveness, and that's the whole reason we're doing this, is just to love on people."

Interestingly, such a large community gathering wasn't a first for Full Throttle Ministries, as Reeves was happy to explain.

"Being an outreach ministry for 12 years now, we do a thing on July 4," he said, referencing the Independence Day bash that has been going on for 10 of those 12 years.

On a larger scale than Saturday's cookout, Reeves estimated that close to 1,000 people show up for sandwiches before fireworks start to shower the night sky during each year's Meeks Park display.

When God told him to host another gathering, Reeves took inspiration from the summertime event, saying, "So today, I thought we were going to prepare for 500-600, and what shows up, shows up."

Later, on Facebook, Reeves noted that there was no food left to clean up; the leftovers had all been taken home to the families of attendees or consumed by those wanting a third helping.

But for the five who found their way back to their Father, Clayton Reeves' Community Cookout was about more than just the food.

"They shared the word of God, and we had five people that gave their life to Christ today," Reeves said. "That's why it was worth it. That's why God laid it on my heart to do this; that's why we did it. That's why the pavilion was



**Catalyst Church Pastor Brandon Matheson helped to inspire five cookout guests to turn their lives over to Jesus on Saturday.**

Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

available, and it was all to fulfill God's plan."

Going forward, Reeves plans on holding the Community Cookout every year on Mother's Day weekend. Closer to the present is Full Throttle's July 4 cookout, which will be held at the other end of the park in the same field the Sorghum Festival takes up each fall.

## Panel Built, Inc. brings award back to Blairsville

At the country's largest and longest-running modular construction convention and trade show, Panel Built, Inc. received recognition for excellence in the industry.

The event, World of Modular, is held annually by the Modular Building Institute, where "Awards of Distinction" are given to the top projects in the industry. The winners are chosen by an independent panel of industry experts ranging from architects and academics to engineers and construction managers. This year, the committee selected Panel Built for the "Relocatable Modular Special Application" category. The award was given to a modular testing booth project designed for rapid deployment at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. This award marks the third selection for Panel Built in MBI's Awards of Distinction.

The World of Modular event is one of Panel Built's many trade show and convention targets for 2022 in an effort to expand into further



(L-R): Trey Thomas (engineering manager), Lee Baenninger (operations manager) and Kevin Ashcraft (project management director).

markets and build business connections. From material handling's premiere show, MODEX, in Atlanta to San Antonio's Border Security Expo, Panel Built has been connecting with professionals from around the world to network, exchange ideas, learn from

experts, and discuss issues for their various industries.

"We feel really fortunate to win the award," says Lee Baenninger, operations manager. "It shows that we are continuing to gain ground and become more of a presence in the modular building industry."

## Kappa Alpha celebrate annual Founder's Day

The members of Kappa Alpha Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi Sorority met on Saturday, April 30, 2022 to celebrate the sorority's annual Founder's Day. Kappa Alpha Members have always been known to be excellent cooks and this time they outdid themselves when they enjoyed an amazingly varied Salad/Dessert luncheon at the Highland Park Community Clubhouse.

Following luncheon President Pam Ippolito opened the meeting with Judy Solberg reading the Founder's Day Letter from International. The new 2022 theme was announced: "Friends at Your Fingertips."

Additional business followed: Our annual scholarship recipient was announced: she is Leyla Hall, Karen Hall's granddaughter. Leyla is graduating from Tri Community College High School in Murphy, NC as both a high school graduate and has completed two years of college. She will continue her education in the fall. Our congratulations and best wishes for her continued success are extended to her.

Our Service Project this month was the collection of



(L-R): Marcy Walsh, Jennie Priven, Judy Solberg, Barbara Delli-Veneri

packaged and canned food for the Union County Food Bank. Our project for next month will support the Union County Senior Center.

Three members have attained the Master's Degree; Pam Ippolito administered the degree to Jennie Priven, Judy Solberg and Marcy Walsh. Then Jennie Priven administered the Preceptor degree to Barbara Delli-Veneri who chose the color Purple for Service for her sorority goal.

Sandy Bell presented the pins and Ursula Whitelock was our photographer.

The meeting closed with a discussion of the many local cultural events available to us presently and in the near future.

Beta Sigma Phi is an international friendship organization whose members represent all ages, backgrounds and education; we focus on the aspects of friendship, social, service and culture. We truly are "Friends at Your Fingertips."

# Habitat for Humanity honors volunteers, seeks recruits

By Jeremy Foster  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

On Monday, May 2, Habitat for Humanity of Towns & Union Counties held an incredibly special "Volunteer Appreciation and Recruitment Day" at the Habitat ReStore at 225 Wellborn Street.

The purpose of the event was to honor the services of Habitat's faithful volunteers while issuing a call for additional volunteer help from the community.

Habitat provides a variety of great services for Towns and Union residents, and as with any great service, it cannot be done without a dedicated staff, and, in this case, equally dedicated volunteers.

That's why Habitat leadership decided to show their appreciation by throwing a party recognizing volunteer efforts.

The celebration featured grilled hot dogs and Papa John's Pizza, live music from Gypsy Mountain Music, a mobile bookstore by Osborne Books, a Lowe's booth, a silent gift auction and door prizes like grills, tools, an ATV cover, cooking ware and kitchen sets, gift baskets of shower essentials, and more.

Madelyn Bailey is the Marketing Director for Habitat and just recently hit the one-year mark with the nonprofit.

"We have done appreciation days before in the past," Bailey said, "but we wanted to make this one the biggest and best so far and held it outside in great weather because we have a lot of volunteers this year who have been working very hard."

"Each month our volunteers average close to 200 hours of work collectively,

so they really deserve to have this day just for them.

"Community support is extremely important in our success; we have a lot of upcoming things happening this summer with sales, our Helping Hands projects and Habitat Home Build, and we could not do anything without our volunteers."

Carol Andrews has been the Volunteer Coordinator for two years now, and she "absolutely loves" what she does.

"It really makes me happy to get involved and give back to the community and get to know so many great people," Andrews said. "Our volunteers are the heart and soul of it to make everything possible."

Habitat Executive Director Charlotte Randall said everyone at Habitat is thrilled to have as many volunteers as they do and to be able to do things to make them feel special for their efforts.

"It brings me much joy when we can have events like this to honor our hardworking volunteers and to make our community aware of what we are doing for the people," Randall said. "We have completed 12 projects so far in 2022, which is huge, so our volunteers and workers deserve this greatly."

"We all certainly want to create more compassion and empathy within the community to show we are there for them."

People interested in supporting the cause either through volunteering or making donations may visit the store in person, call 706-745-7101 or email operations@townsunionhabitat.org.



Kim and Curtis Jones of Mountain Gypsy Music entertained guests of the Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Appreciation Day on May 2.

Photo by Jeremy Foster



Members of the local Habitat for Humanity served as friendly faces greeting volunteers during last week's appreciation event and recruitment drive.

Photo by Jeremy Foster



## Kiwanis CLUB OF BLAIRSVILLE Pancake Extravaganza!

The Blairsville Kiwanis Club is sponsoring a Pancake Extravaganza! on Saturday, May 14th from 7 AM until 10 AM at LongHorn Steakhouse, 105 Bracketts Way, Blairsville, GA for \$7 per person, accompanied kids under 8 eat free. Carry out available, tickets can be purchased online: <https://square.link/t/IXDupu2k>

A portion of the proceeds will go to help build Isaiah 117 House. Your donation helps fund Blairsville Kiwanis Club's many projects supporting our youth and community.

## Military Flagship Banner ...from Page 1A



Local stakeholders met with state officials May 6 for the presentation of a Military Flagship School award honoring the patriotism of Union County High School.

Photo by Mark Smith

families, whether that's retired or active.

"It's important that we support our (military) families because they are concerned about their kids when they move into any state or any new deployment. It means a lot to these families. And, growing

up in a military family, I know what that looks like.

"So, I'm proud of what we've done as a state and of our continued support of the United States military."

Georgia Department of Education Military Student and Family Specialist Rachale

LaVoie heads up the Military Flagship Award Program, and she said she was "excited to be here in Union County awarding Union County High the Military Flagship Award."

LaVoie is herself a military spouse.

"It is a unique opportunity,

and we give those awards out to schools that are going above and beyond to help our military students and families," LaVoie said. "We definitely want to highlight those excellent best practices that are happening throughout the year."

Every year, Union County graduates more than its fair share of students going into the military, which is a testament to the patriotism of North Georgia Mountains residents.

"It is vital, in our opinion, that we impress upon our children the sacrifices that (the military) has made for us to have the freedoms and liberties that we do in this country," Union County Schools Superintendent John Hill said.

"We always want to continue to get better," Hill continued. "To be the welcoming school district when a military family moves into the community. To be the

school district that impresses the values upon our graduates to honor the folks that have served our great nation."

Hill went on to say that the local Board of Education and the community support the efforts of school leadership.

"We're very blessed, very rich in a sense, that we have such a supportive community," Hill said.

Union County Board of Education Chair Tony Hunter and Board Member Julia Barnett also attended the ceremony, as did Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce President Steve Rowe.

"This is about our kids," said retired U.S. Army Command Sgt. Major Art McCann, who is enjoying a second career as a Union County High School Administrative Assistant. "It's based on taking care of children of veterans and active-duty soldiers in the school system."

"For (Union County Schools), we do the Veterans Day ceremony, the Quilt of Valor ceremonies, participate in the Wreaths Across America program and Memorial Day events. And we have our Military Hall of Honor in the main entrance to the high school."

According to McCann, it's important that new students, especially those with military parents who move around a lot,

be welcomed so they can enjoy all the same things stationary kids do.

"I have three boys; they've all attended two to three high schools because they've moved with me from point to point," McCann said, adding that it's especially difficult for military parents who have children with disabilities.

"As a senior non-commissioned officer (when still on active duty), I sat in on a meeting with military parents, and I never realized the struggle they have when they have kids with mental and physical disabilities."

"They have to find the appropriate school that can serve their kids. So, a lot of times, they can't go where they want to go (to best further their military career), and that's what they do to best take care of their kids."

As Hill said, the Union County School District is unique because of the people who live here and move here. And it's important that the standard and culture that "we've developed over the last hundred-plus years" be maintained and allowed to flourish.

Respecting those who sacrifice to make it all possible is part of that culture. Congratulations to Union County High for being named a Georgia Military Flagship School.

## National Day of Prayer ...from Page 1A

of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, and I'm going to ask you to pray with me tonight that that would be the case."

Pastor Justin Jarrett of New Union Baptist Church prayed for the nation's schools.

"I'm here tonight to pray for our (nation's) education, which really means praying for our children, for our educators, for our educational systems," Jarrett said. "Before I can pray for them, I want to point out that our children are our future."

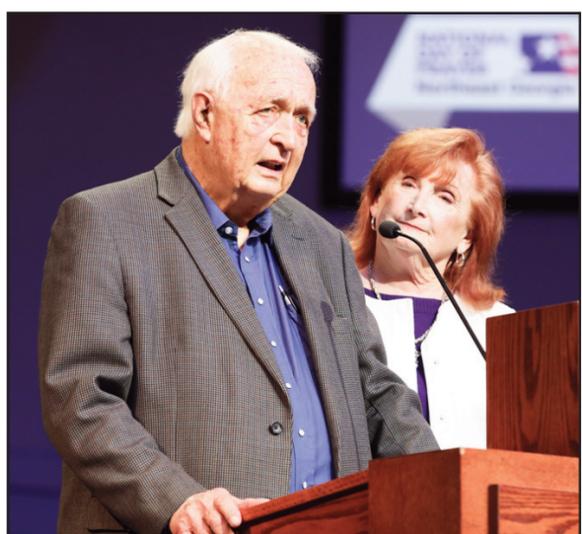
"The children that we have in our school systems and around us in our churches, right now they are our future. They are our future pastors, they're our future doctors and technicians, they're our future military, our future government, our future business owners."

"They are our future, and above all that, they are the future of the church. And so, as we pray for them tonight, pray with that in mind," he said as he began his prayer.

Pastor Hartley prayed for the nation's media - entertainment media, print media, social media, news media - that they would speak the truth of God and point people toward His redemptive plan for all humanity.

Associational Missionary Stacy Dyer of Morganton & Mountaintown Baptist Associations prayed for the nation's churches.

"A lot of things have come and gone, but the church is still here," Dyer said. "I want to tell you what Blairsville, Georgia, and the whole world



Jack and Pam Schroeder organized the 2022 National Day of Prayer event in Union County.

Photo by Mark Smith

has got to have. And it's God's church. God's church prevails. If we ever needed the power of God in our churches, it is right now."

Pastor Don Parmely of New Union Baptist Church prayed over the nation's military.

"Father, we pray, first of all, for their leadership," Parmely said. "Lord, we pray that You would help leadership to make wise and ethical decisions. Lord, I pray that You would help those who are currently serving ... to turn to You."

Pastor Darryl Flake of House of Prayer Church prayed for the nation's businesses.

"We just want to pray and trust God, that He would use businesses and people's work to accomplish the greater glory for His kingdom," Flake said.

Pastor Calvin Bobo of First Baptist Church in Andrews, North Carolina, prayed for world missions.

"Lord, please bless our nation," Bobo prayed. "Please bless our people, though none of us deserve it. Lord, please bring spiritual revival to those of us who know You through Christ. And please bring a spiritual awakening to those who know You not."

Organized by Jack and Pam Schroeder, the 2022 National Day of Prayer event also featured ushering services from Joshua's Warriors, "a Christ-centered non-denominational men's group whose mission is to Restore, Preserve and Protect the God-given rights and freedoms endowed in the Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights."