

Rogers...from Page 1A

Union County native supported his community; he also played a major role in kickstarting multiple generations of youth sports in Blairsville.

Athletics were very important to Rogers, but at the time, there wasn't much going on sports-wise in Union County.

That's why, years ago, he and several of his friends – other old-time pillars of the community – teamed up to form the Quarterback Club with the express purpose of raising money to start a football team at Union County High.

The club was wildly successful, completing its goal of starting a football team in short order. It also served as the main fundraiser for other sports programs that came along over the years.

And if it weren't for the club, the Union County School District would look very different now.

Back when the board of education was looking to grow the school system, in the middle of the 20th century, school board members approached the Wellborn family about buying the land that the schools inhabit today.

For reasons lost to time, the Wellborns wouldn't sell the land to the schools, though they did negotiate to sell it to the Quarterback Club – the Rogers and Wellborns are kin, after all.

The club then donated the land to the school board, making way for all of the facilities that have helped to educate several generations of Union County schoolchildren. Even now, the Quarterback Club continues to champion student athletics, just as Rogers did all those years.

Yet another way Rogers supported his community was by assisting local Freemasons in any way he could. Himself a Mason for 70 years, Rogers trusted his fellow Masons to meet above his store after business hours.

Like all Freemason organizations, Allegheny Lodge No. 114 existed – and still does – to serve the needs of the community, and members eventually built their lodge headquarters directly across

Tags...from Page 1A

with a stated goal of upgrading and modernizing the vehicle registration and titling system.

The new system is being rolled out in two phases, of which Phase I will be going live on May 28, while implementation of Phase II will be undertaken by the Department of Driver Services in January 2021.

Knight said one of the immediate benefits of the new system is its ease of use, which he and each of his tax clerks have trained extensively on already for a total of more than 270 hours.

"Clerks have been able to practice on the new DRIVES system in sandbox mode, which simulates the actual transactions that they will be doing on the new computer system," said Knight. "I feel confident that the Union County Tax Commissioner's Office and staff will be ready and well-trained to implement the new DRIVES system."

Several changes are coming after the system upgrade, including titles being printed in 8.5-by-11 inch full-page format, as compared to the current smaller printouts.

Temporary tags will be incorporating much more detailed information about the vehicles they are registered to, such as year, make, model and color.

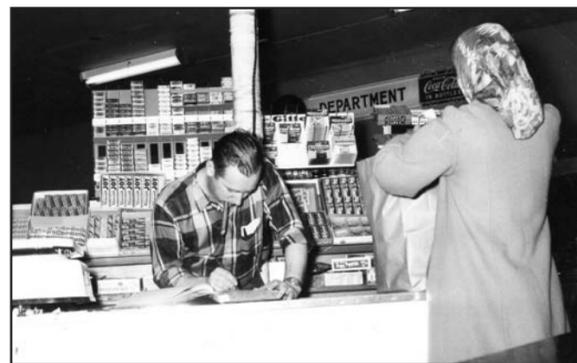
There will also be a host of convenient new online services available under the new system, including title registration pre-application, registration cancellation, address changing, title status lookup, insurance fine payments and more.

And while it's possible that walk-in customers may experience longer lines for a brief time after the upgrade, Knight said he feels that won't be an issue here in Union County.

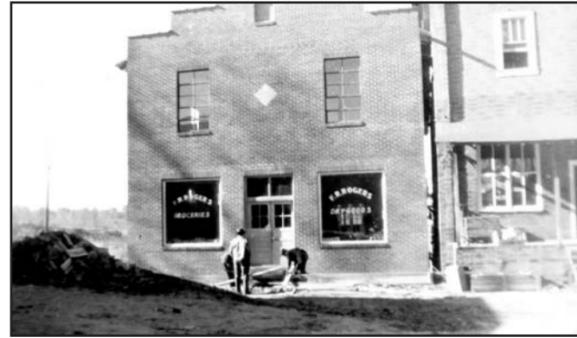
For more information in the leadup to the upgrade, call the Tax Commissioner's Office at 706-439-6017 or check out uniongatax.com.

2019 MECHS Graduation

Mountain Education Charter High School will be hosting Graduation on May 25, 2019 at one o'clock in the afternoon. The ceremony will be held at the University of North Georgia in Dahlonega in the Convocation Center. For the first time, MECHS will graduate seniors from all sixteen locations at one time. Please come out and support the MECHS Graduating Class of 2019.



Ray Rogers figuring a bill at the register of Rogers Grocery while smoking a cigar.



An early photograph of Rogers Grocery in Downtown Blairsville.

from the grocery on Rogers Street.

The Rogers Building even has a Masonic symbol in the brickwork on the front of the building, and Ray passed down his love for the Masons to his son, Terry, who served as a past Worshipful Master of Allegheny Lodge.

Terry also inherited his father's sense of duty and love of athletics. In high school, he set a record that has yet to be beaten when he rushed 200-plus yards in five consecutive games, and later, Terry enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps.

After returning home from the military in the 1970s, Terry led countless youths as a coach on and off the field, and he served as longtime athletic director in Union County.

He was recently inducted into the Georgia Athletic Director's Association Class of 2019 Hall of Fame, and Terry has been a leader in student athletics at the local, state and national levels.

Like her brother, Kay also inherited her father's love of sports. When she didn't make the basketball team in her eighth-grade year, she, her father and Terry committed to honing her skills to ensure she made the cut her freshman year.

Ray installed a basketball goal outside the family home, located on what is now Hunt Martin Street, and Kay would practice every evening after school and work for the next year.

Her father and brother rebounded shots when necessary, and if the ball got

too cold and deflated during wintertime, Ray would run in the house to warm it up in the oven.

Kay Rogers – who goes by Kay Bradley now – not only played basketball all four years of high school but also set a school record that still stands by scoring 54 points in a single game, and in her last three years, she averaged 33 points a game.

Such was Ray Rogers' commitment to his family, his community and his country.

Unfortunately, Rogers' health began to decline earlier this year, and so, about two months ago, he went to live at the Chatuge Regional Nursing Home for round-the-clock care before passing away on May 9.

Rogers is survived by his wife, two children, two siblings, several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He was buried at Union Memory Gardens on Sunday, May 12, with Military Honors by the North Georgia Honor Guard. Terry also performed Masonic graveside rites for his father.

The Rogers family is proud of their patriarch, who leaves behind a lasting legacy of selfless giving to others.

"My dad believed in doing what's right and trying to help people who weren't able to help themselves," said Terry. "He probably gave away more groceries than he ever sold."

"He was a very loyal person to his family, and he was loyal to the military and to the Masonic Lodge. He was an old-timer."