

## Scottish Festival...from Page 1A

different, with scheduled acts and impromptu jam sessions.

A few of the new artists joining this year's lineup include the Piper Jones Band, Good Thymes Ceilidh Band, and Montreat Scottish Pipes and Drums. The festival will also feature returning acts like the Blarney Girls, Bob Valentine, Colin Grant and more fan favorites.

Those looking to take a more educational path will find workshops and live demonstrations throughout the weekend, such as bagpipe, Scottish fiddle and Scottish harp workshops, plus Clan Nan Con re-enactors and ancient Scottish weaponry demonstrations.

Many of the vendors will also feature demonstrations throughout the day.

On Sunday at 9 a.m., the Kirkin' church service will be held at the entertainment tent, and the festival will continue for its second full day.

Throughout the weekend, people can visit the Scottish Tartans Museum tent for information on their family clan and tartan. Folks may also visit the clan tent of their family name for additional information about their highland roots.

Admission is \$15 for single-day passes or \$25 for the weekend. Volunteers are needed everywhere for both days and will receive complimentary admission and free water in exchange for one four-hour

shift.

People interested in helping out may visit the festival website at [blairsvillescottishfestival.com](http://blairsvillescottishfestival.com) or call 706-745-2161 during normal business hours.

## Market...from Page 1A

and visitors.

"I really love this market," said Jill Paterson, one of the many guests at the opening. "I live a couple hours away, but I travel frequently and stop in this market on my way back home a few times during the season.

"This has to be the best market around the North Georgia area, and I love how great these local farmers are and the passion they have for their product."

Local farmers have used the Farmers Market for years to provide fresh produce for the community, like Freddie Collins Farm, which has been a vendor since the market was held in the parking lot of the Union County Courthouse.

Like many Farmers Market vendors, Collins' operation has developed a terrific reputation that keeps people coming back looking for more produce every week.

"We have been coming to the Farmers Market ever since it opened," said Collins. "We do all kinds of farming – really anything that will grow, we like to do. I'm hoping this season will be a good one and we get some traffic out every week."

Market Manager Mickey Cummings said he's excited about Farmers Market Way, which is the new entrance at Georgia 515.

"I'm hoping this new road helps a lot," said Cummings. "What it's going to do is increase traffic flow and hopefully make it more efficient and safer for getting people in and out."

A major part of the Farmer Market and farming

Potential volunteers for the children's games/activities can contact Hannah Mitchell at 770-547-7419.

"Last year's festival brought over 3,000 visitors to Blairsville-Union County," said

Festival Planning Committee Chairman Joe Satterfield. "But I personally believe that these upcoming games and Scottish festival will be the best we've had in its 16 years, and I'm really looking forward to it."



Visitors entering the Union County Farmers Market using the new entrance at Georgia 515 during the June 1 season opener. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

is how well the weather holds up throughout the season, with the sunshine of opening day offering a promising start in 2019.

"I think today has been good and we have a good crowd of people here," said Cummings. "Unlike last year, it was wet all year. We need a little bit of water, but we don't need to be inundated with water.

"So, I'm hoping that this next year we have enough water to get by, but it's not so muddy that we have all the disease problems. It looks like it's starting out to be a great year."

And the Farmers Market offers more than just produce by local farmers, with many vendors attending every Saturday to sell crafts, lotions, soaps and other locally-made goods.

"I crochet a lot of things to sell, but my most popular item is the rice bags, which you can heat up to put on your

aches and pains, or freeze them to make wonderful ice packs," said Elizabeth Hall, who has sold crafts at the Farmers Market for eight years. "I think this year at the Farmers Market will be better than last year, because every year is better than the last.

"It's a really nice place to be since the venue is covered and there are cement floors, so you don't have to worry about walking on gravel or anything. I think it's a great part of the area, and people love it."

The Farmers Market, located at 148 Old Smokey Road, puts on special events throughout the year, offering plenty of activities for attendees while they do their weekly shopping.

Market hours are Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Tuesdays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. For more information on upcoming events, visit [UnionCountyGA.gov/Farmers-Market](http://UnionCountyGA.gov/Farmers-Market).

## New Road...from Page 1A



The Farmers Market Way ribbon-cutting ceremony by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce was well attended by stakeholders and community members last week.

Photo by Mark Smith

assist in bringing growth and development to Union County and Blairsville."

Decker pointed out that work on the intersection was done by the Northeast Region's DOT forces rather than contractors.

Sen. Gooch also praised the completion of the Farmers Market Way project.

"Intersections like this add a lot of value to projects where there's commercial retail, private or public," said Gooch. "This entrance into the Farmers Market is critical because you have hundreds of people coming and going, especially on weekends.

"Having a traffic light to be able to come in and out will save lives and improve the safety of this roadway for years to come. It's going to continue to bring more prosperity to this area and the county.

"I'm glad that Lamar (Paris) was able to put this deal together and that we were able to put some money into it from the state. It's a good partnership. It's all about relationships – working with your state and local elected officials.

"This is another example of the good things that can happen when you stick together and do what's good for the community."

Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley and Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris both spoke at the ceremony, recognizing Farmers Market Manager Mickey Cummings, Market Coordinator Kristy Peney, GDOT officials and Sen. Gooch.

"The Farmers Market and Cannery has been one of the most successful projects we have instituted since I became commissioner in Union County 19 years ago," said Paris. "During the season, we have been averaging 2,000 to 4,000 visitors every Saturday.

"The growth of the Farmers Market and the many who use the property – from car shows, Relay For Life,

Trash to Treasures, and many other community events – makes this property and the new access totally valuable to our citizens."

Paris also described the new county property between the Farmers Market and Georgia 515, which Farmers Market Way skirts, as a 45-acre parcel that took several years to acquire and piece together.

A digital rendering of an upcoming outdoor facility was then unveiled by Paris, who said that the new facility would not have been possible without the Farmers Market Way access road entrance.

Plans for the new facility are to have a series of T-ball and coach-pitch fields, a soccer field, and other outdoor athletic grounds across Butternut Creek from the Farmers Market. This project is set to begin sometime in 2020 or 2021.

"None of these present and future plans would be possible without Sen. Gooch, GDOT Commissioner Russell

McMurry, and our GDOT Board Member Emily Dunn, previous GDOT District Engineer Brent Cook, and our knight in shining armor, GDOT Preconstruction Engineer Sue Anne Decker," said Paris. "Sen. Gooch is always there for our county and our region.

"We call on him often to assist. He's always willing to do what it takes to help us, and we call him our friend. Thank you very much, Sen. Gooch.

"These projects are done because GDOT realizes we have safety issues. And when you get a certain traffic count on highways, you've got to do something or it's going to be miserable for your people and the public transfer going through your area."

Paris thanked everyone for attending the ceremony and for supporting Union County with their SPLOST dollars, adding that the April SPLOST check for Union County was \$434,000, the highest check ever for the county.