

North Georgia News

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LaGrange couple deliver baby on Georgia 515 with 911 help

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Union County and her first responders will forever hold a special place in the hearts of Constance Huskins and Chris Phelan of LaGrange.

And one day, their daughter, Mila Rose Phelan, will likely feel the same after listening in amazement to the story of her miraculous birth on the side of Georgia 515.

Nowadays, dads are rarely called upon to deliver their own children, much less do it on the side of the highway. But that's precisely what happened the evening of June 3, not quite three weeks shy of Father's Day.

"I give credit to God, because I ain't no doctor," Phelan said, recalling the moment his fiancée Huskins, then 38 weeks pregnant, went into labor in the passenger seat of their car.



Mila Rose Phelan weighed 5 pounds, 11 ounces and was 16 inches long at birth.

The young couple was driving up to visit family near Copperhill, Tennessee, when everything happened. Phelan reacted the way any father

would; he put the pedal to the medal and pointed his Ford Fusion in the direction of Union General Hospital.

It was 11 p.m. at night and they were unfamiliar with the area, so they had to rely on a mix of GPS and verbal directions delivered via phone by hospital staff to guide them into town.

"As we started going to the Blairsville hospital, her water broke on the way while I was on the phone with the hospital, so I hung up and called 911," Phelan said.

On the other end of the line was Union County 911 Dispatcher Lynn Powell, a former paramedic with 20 years of combined experience as a first responder and dispatcher.

A mother herself, Powell put her emotions aside and fell back on her training as she gathered vital information while talking Huskins, and later Phelan, through the intense labor-or-death situation.

"It was just my training that kicked in," Powell said. "I used to work in the hospital delivery room, and sometimes I think you just get the calls you were meant to have."

Powell asked a few basic questions that helped her realize how dire the circumstances were for young Mila Rose, whose mother had lost two of her previous three children due to breech births, which occurs when a baby is born bottom first.

Moments later, Powell received even more alarming news when Huskins informed her that the baby was indeed coming feet-first, and worse, that it was "stuck."

Without knowing exactly where the couple was on the highway, Powell and fellow 911 operator Kasey Rafter began dispatching first responders westward on Georgia 515.

Then, finally, a bit of



911 Dispatchers Kasey Rafter and Lynn Powell handled the emergency call during which Mila Rose was born. Powell was on the phone with the family, while Rafter coordinated the ambulance and police.

good news as Phelan spotted the local Walmart on his left. Upon hearing the location, Powell quickly informed them to pull over and put their flashers on and wait for paramedics. In a split-second decision, See Mila Rose, Page 2A

Paris considers future of jail facility, accepts contracts in meeting

By Shawn Jarrard
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For the second month in a row during the pandemic, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris welcomed folks to his regular county meeting, which was canceled in March and April due to the novel coronavirus.

All attendees were required to wear masks, which were provided as needed.

Paris kicked things off by approving a \$2,500 agreement between the county and CHA Consulting to provide a "Conceptual Site Plan and Feasibility Study" for the Union County Jail.

"This simply involves planning for the possibility of a jail upgrade or new jail in the distant future," Paris said. "Now, I didn't say the near future, I said the distant future. I'm thinking of that like years away; I hope it's like lightyears away."

"Anyway, we're having



Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris

to look at evaluating property along the way, and we feel that we need to be looking for that property now so that if we find a parcel that the sheriff and myself feel is a future site, we must evaluate it, and that's what we've done with this contract."

The commissioner also accepted an agreement

between the U.S. Army Garrison out of Fort Benning and several nearby counties to create "a systematic approach to expedite local and regional mutual aid assistance, share information, and rapidly share and sustain emergency aid and resources."

"This is basically See County Meeting, Page 2A

Sheriff's Office seizes 70 plants, stolen property and more in pot bust

By Shawn Jarrard
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The Union County Sheriff's Office has noticed a declining trend in recent years, namely that fewer and fewer people are growing marijuana in the county.

As it has become cheaper for people to import higher quality pot from elsewhere,

the number of folks taking the time to actually grow it here has dwindled. But that doesn't mean it's gone away entirely.

Following a monthlong investigation, on Tuesday, June 16, Narcotics Division investigators responded to a property on Patterson Lane in reference to the subject named Dave Patterson.

The investigation began

after the Sheriff's Office started receiving anonymous tips about certain illegal drug activities taking place off Patterson Lane.

UCSO Lt. Tyler Miller said. At the same time, investigators knew that the Department of Community Supervision had been attempting to serve Patterson with probation violation

See Pot Bust, Page 6A



Narcotics investigators with the Union County Sheriff's Office confiscated 70 pot plants, a firearm, cash and stolen items at a local Walmart off Patterson Lane last week. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Conservation District members gather to discuss goals, objectives

By Jarrett Whitener
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Staff Writer

Members of the Blue Ridge Mountain Soil & Water Conservation District held their first in-person meeting since the start of the pandemic on Friday, June 19, choosing to gather in Meeks Park due to the spacing and open-air seating.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts were created in 1937 by the Georgia General Assembly with the purpose of protecting the state's soil and water resources following the Dust Bowl of the 1930s.

"Districts provide a way for citizens to set local resource priorities for state and federal assistance programs," per https://gaswcc.georgia. See Conservation, Page 6A



Micah Williams with the Georgia Association of Conservation Districts discussed two reports in last week's Blue Ridge Mountain Soil & Water Conservation District meeting. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

BOE talks reopening, grant award and new athletic director

By Todd Forrest
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The Union County Board of Education met Tuesday, June 16, for its first in-person public meeting since March, though the proceedings were also livestreamed via YouTube.

With board members, staff and visitors practicing social-distancing, the meeting touched on the upcoming 2020-21 school calendar, COVID-19 concerns, state grants, personnel changes and more.

Leading off the agenda was a discussion on potential alterations to the upcoming school calendar. While nothing

See Schools Reopening, Page 3A



Union County Schools Assistant Superintendent David Murphy discussed potential 2020-21 school year reopening plans in the June 16 school board meeting. Photo by Todd Forrest

Farmers Market brings baked goods back, adjusts virus procedures

By Jarrett Whitener
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Since opening June 6 with altered procedures and reduced capacity due to COVID-19, the Union County Farmers Market has been working to phase in more vendors while maintaining precautions to keep everyone safe, customers and vendors alike.

One of the precautions has been to have vendors set up facing outward in the shopping sheds to keep people from

congregating on the interior of the buildings.

But on Saturday, June 20, the Farmers Market switched back to vendors facing inward and having guests walk through as normal, and the market also gladly welcomed back sellers of baked goods and other food vendors.

"All of those are back today, boiled peanuts and ice cream are back today," Market Manager Mickey Cummings said. "We are selling back on the inside, but you can notice

that we have the vendors a little further back, and that is primarily to keep the middle area from crowding.

"Hopefully, people can maintain their social distancing, and I try to make that announcement every 30 minutes. We will bring back the crafters (June 27), and they can go about this in the same way.

"We are still not allowing people to drive up here (near the buildings) because there is so much foot traffic. We

may start letting handicapped people drive in here, but that would be it. Anything we can do, we are doubling down on and trying to encourage people to use masks."

Baked good vendors were certainly happy to return to the market Saturday, and they look forward to a great year.

LuAnn Quaiel of Lulu's Southern Sweets has spent the last few months perfecting and altering her recipes in See Farmers Market, Page 6A



Freddie Collins Farm had plenty of fresh kale for sale at the Farmers Market Saturday. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Vol. 111 No. 26
4 Sections 24 Pages
Weather
Thurs: T-Storm Hi 80 Lo 59
Fri: Sunny Hi 84 Lo 62
Sat: Cloudy Hi 85 Lo 65

Inside
Arrests 2D
Church 2B
Classifieds 3D
Opinion 4A
Legals 4D
Obits 4B
Sports 2C

Ninth District Opportunity Cooling Help

See page 3B

Meet Me at the Market

See page 5C

Union County Headstart Registration

See page 2D

Upcoming Events at GA Mtn Fairgrounds

See page 6C