

Fireworks...from Page 1A

taught that starting a country from scratch was a monumental task, and somewhere over time that has been forgotten.

"This country was founded by settlers and immigrants, and I think that the spirit of that still sticks around today, because we have people coming here all the time to experience the freedoms and benefits that we have here."

"I think it's important to remember the hard work that everyone went through to build this country, and keep that hard work going today to continue moving this country to be truly free for everyone."

Also at the church, the local Girl Scouts of the USA held a Flag Retirement Ceremony, where everyone gathered around as a worn American flag was respectfully cut up and laid on a flame to properly burn away.

Attendees of the ceremony watched in silence

with hands held over their hearts as the young ladies honored and retired the flag.

Down the road at Meeks Park and North Georgia Technical College, vendors sold snacks and other products, and people moved about with tremendous enthusiasm for the occasion.

"I think it's great that they have these fireworks shows," said local resident Becky Samples. "It's great to have everyone come out together and celebrate something that everyone supports. It's also just fun to watch and good for us to have here."

The fireworks are conducted annually by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, which itself is thankful for the opportunity to provide a patriotic event for the community.

"Just in this area, there's at least a thousand if

not more people here to see the fireworks," said Chamber President Steve Rowe. "Also, not all of these people are from Blairsville. A lot of them are, but it brings a lot of families together and provides something for all ages."

"That's the main reason for keeping this going, is for these families. It's great to bring these families together and bring the community together. And with everything going on in the world and nation where people can't get along, this is perfect for putting that aside and celebrating together."

The July Fourth fireworks began as soon as the sun went down, and families and children watched in awe as the amazing display lit up the night sky over Meeks Park.

People made their way back to their cars following the grand finale, all the while talking about the show they just witnessed and the memories they made with their families this Fourth of July.



The Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter Sons of the American Revolution attended the Independence Day festivities at First United Methodist Church.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener



Girl Scouts of the USA Troop 11365 conducting a Flag Retirement Ceremony at First United Methodist on July 4, 2019.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

Vogel...from Page 1A



Visitors to Vogel State Park enjoying some fun in the sun during a sandcastle building competition on the Fourth of July.

Photo by Mark Smith

really about," Burkett said. "It's not about cookouts. It's about what our country is, how it got founded and what we should be all about."

Chelsea Pierce and her husband were visiting from Gwinnett County with their three boys, which is something they've done every

Independence Day for about the last 15 years.

"We love coming here to celebrate it," Pierce said. "It's a family tradition. And being together with family and spending time together - it's just awesome."

Bridget Anderson and her two children traveled to

North Georgia from Barrow County.

"My kids love coming to Vogel. It's one of our favorite spots," Anderson said.

For more information on Vogel State Park or to reserve a cabin, call 706-745-5129.



Veterans Michael Burkett, Mike Hoover and Jack Becker raising the U.S. flag at Vogel on Independence Day.

Photo by Mark Smith

Red Cross of Georgia seeks Disaster Action Team Volunteers

Rome, GA, July 1, 2019 - The Red Cross of Northwest Georgia is actively recruiting volunteers to join their Disaster Action Team (DAT). Nationwide, trained Red Cross disaster workers respond to more than 64,000 emergencies each year--most often home fires--and help families and individuals meet basic needs like safe shelter, food, water, clothing and the replacement of medications following emergencies of every type and size.

Red Cross Volunteers Give Hope After Tragedy: Red Cross volunteers provide emotional support and a shoulder to cry on for those affected by emergencies and disasters and the need in northwest Georgia is tremendous. In the past 12 months alone, Red Cross Disaster Action Team volunteers have helped over 200 families following more than 175 emergencies and disasters in 13 counties including: Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Murray, Polk, Union, Walker and Whitfield.

Train to Become a Red Cross Disaster Responder:

Currently, more than 100 kind-hearted and dedicated individuals actively volunteer with the Red Cross of Northwest Georgia - but more volunteers are needed now. Joining the Red Cross as a volunteer is a meaningful experience and it is also easy, because all training is provided by the Red Cross.

People interested in joining the Red Cross of Georgia as a Disaster Action Team volunteer should e-mail GAREcruit@redcross.org, call 404-575-3749 or visit RedCross.org/volunteer to learn about volunteer opportunities across all five lines of Red Cross service.