

North Georgia News

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McCann inducted into Ranger Hall of Fame, honored at BOE meeting

By Shawn Jarrard
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U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Art McCann during a 2005-2006 deployment to Afghanistan.

Retired U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur J. McCann III received recognition in the Aug. 20 Union County Board of Education meeting for his recent induction into the Ranger Hall of Fame.

McCann retired from the military in 2010 following 28 years of service to his country, and he is currently enjoying a second career as an administrative assistant at Union County High.

The Aug. 20 award, presented by High School Principal C.T. Hussion, was in recognition of McCann's July 10 induction into the Ranger Hall of Fame at Fort Benning.

of Fame began in 1992, it has seen the induction of only a select few Rangers each year, living and deceased, from all over the nation.

McCann learned that he was to be inducted toward the beginning of summer vacation, shortly after classes let out from the 2018-2019 school year. He'd been fishing Lake Nottely when his friend and fellow Ranger Bob Williams rang him on his cellphone.

Williams is the current president of the U.S. Mountain Ranger Association based out of Camp Frank D. Merrill in Dahlonega, and he had put McCann's name up for Hall of Fame consideration about a year and a half ago.

So, when McCann's

nomination was accepted earlier this summer, Williams was happy to reach out to the retired Ranger turned school administrator to share the news.

"I said, 'Wow, that's pretty good,'" McCann said, recalling his reaction. "I didn't know what to do, to tell you the truth. I was a little overwhelmed - I had to call my wife."

The moment was overwhelming for McCann because, having been a career Army Ranger, he knew very well the level of honor and integrity associated with the Ranger Hall of Fame.

After all, the Hall of Fame is a place for heroes, for men and women who chose to serve their country courageously while

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Union County High Principal C.T. Hussion with retired Army Ranger and High School Board Adminstrating Assistant Art McCann in the Aug. 20 board meeting. Photo by Mark Smith

Paris accepts rollback millage rate, clarifies budget issues in meeting

By Shawn Jarrard
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increased by about 2.1%, showcasing growth of roughly \$27 million from \$1.26 billion in 2018 to \$1.287 billion in 2019.

And the increase is due largely to actual growth, either from home improvements, or from new developments and property owners in the county.

At 6.144 mills, the county stands to collect \$7,909,357 once all 2019 property taxes have been paid, which is \$153,413 more in projected tax revenues than in 2018.

So, even with the adoption of the rollback millage rate, which is just under last year's rate of 6.153 mills, the county will collect a greater amount of property tax revenues in 2019 thanks to the increased tax digest.

Most people are likely to see a very small property tax decrease this year, as the lowered millage rate will result in slightly lower tax bills for folks whose property values remained the same in 2019.

Following the setting of the county millage rate, as well as the setting of the school millage rate that was expected to take place in a meeting that



Lamar Paris

occurred after press time on Aug. 27, property tax bills can be calculated for mailing in the next month.

Also in the Aug. 22 called county meeting, Commissioner Paris said there was something else he wanted to discuss "to help clarify some numbers."

"Back on June 20, we were required to amend the county budget, as per our auditors," Paris said. "There are two issues that have caused some confusion when dealing with budget amendments last

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Heritage Festival, Tractor Show & Parade to headline Labor Day Weekend

By Jarrett Whitener
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

For many families every year, Labor Day Weekend serves as one last chance to participate in summertime community activities, as kids have started back to school and the season is getting ready to transition to fall.

With that in mind, folks can still take part in several summer activities this Labor Day Weekend.

The ever-popular annual Mountain Heritage Festival by the Union County Historical Society will begin on Saturday, Aug. 31, and run through Sunday, Sept. 1.

This festival puts history first, as it celebrates the old-time mountain culture of Union County on the grounds of the Historic Mountain Life Museum in Downtown Blairsville.

"The Mountain Heritage Festival is of course free and open to the public," said Joanne Sales of the Historical Society. "We have around 60 vendors, and that's all handmade products."

"We have music, food, arts and crafts, and living



The annual Mountain Heritage Festival is a great way to look back on the Union County of yesteryear.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson/2015

history, and of course, they can tour the restored 1906 Mock House and the cabins and farmstead."

Live demonstrations during the festival will show attendees the way life used to be during the early years of Union County.

"It's neat to have these demonstrations, because a lot of these people have never seen how some of the things were done back then," Sales said. "They get to see what it's like

to get milk, cook out on an open fire, and other things before technology really advanced here.

"The Mock House will show you how people lived here in Union County in the early 1900s, and the cabins will show you how they lived around 1861. It's a good experience for the kids as well as the grown-ups to see how we lived here in Union County and how things were done and handled in the

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TVA Board votes NO on new rate increase; no rate increases through 2030

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following the Tennessee Valley's energy needs for the next 20 years.

"Since 2013, we've been focused on strengthening our financial foundation to allow us to better meet future needs," TVA President and CEO Jeff Lyash said. "Through hard work and dedication to that goal, we've achieved many of our 10-year goals in only six years, which allows us to keep our wholesale rates steady."

The \$10.59 billion FY20 budget continues to emphasize efficiency and operational excellence while balancing investments, existing assets, new capabilities and debt reduction.

"Our success to this point has come from a disciplined approach to how we run our business, which has allowed us to reduce our debt to its lowest point in 25 years and still invest in our generation and transmission system," TVA Chief Financial Officer John Thomas said. "That same

financial discipline will now allow us to maintain stable rates through 2030 and implement the initiatives recommended by the IRP."

TVA's updated Integrated Resource Plan, or IRP, looks forward 20 years and calls for a continued reduction in TVA's carbon footprint, partially through the inclusion of up to 14 gigawatts of new solar capacity by 2038.

"The energy market continues to evolve, and the IRP provides us flexible ways to keep delivering safe, reliable and cleaner power at the lowest feasible cost of energy," Lyash said. "More importantly, the IRP reflects the collective thoughts and suggestions of the more than 1,200 people who commented on the plan, as well as the hundreds more who attended public meetings and webinars - all individuals who will directly benefit from the improvements

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Schools embrace ambitious CTAE projects; Garrett to retire after 43 years

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Josh Davis presented some excellent news regarding the Union County Schools Career, Technical and Agricultural Education Program in the Aug. 20 school board meeting.

Davis is the director of the CTAE Program in Union County, and he said CTAE would soon be partnering with Towns/Union Habitat for Humanity to build an entire house.

And hopefully many more to come.

The partnership will be modeled after a similar, reportedly very successful program that CTAE Construction Teacher Charley Cattanch discovered in

Lumpkin County last spring, Davis said.

Simply put, the idea is to have the students partially construct a house on campus, then move it to a site where it will be finished, though a final building site has yet to be determined.

"This is exciting," Board Chair Cindy Odom said. "It's not just teaching them a skill; it's teaching them compassion. It's teaching them working in their community and working with people that maybe do not have the opportunities that they do."

Davis agreed, saying the students would be getting not only hands-on carpentry experience but also, experience learning electrical, plumbing, HVAC and possibly even masonry.

Moving along, Davis



Union County Middle Schooler Noel Hyatt after receiving her "Going the Extra Mile Award" at the Aug. 20 board of education meeting. Photo by Mark Smith

informed the board that he and the school leadership team were in the process of applying for a \$3 million competitive state grant for a Georgia College and Career Academy, with paperwork due by Sept. 19.

Georgia College and Career Academies are a part of the Technical College System of Georgia and feature programs that align with the existing CTAE curriculum.

Such a local addition, if granted, would help to grow the local workforce beyond what is currently possible and supply "our local industry with the workforce they need," Davis said.

"We're looking at a

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Four candidates qualify for three City Council seats ahead of Nov. 5 election

By Shawn Jarrard
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The four qualifiers were incumbents Rhonda Mahan, Betty Easter and Mary Ruth Cook, along with Blairsville resident Frank Pack.

As city election outcomes are determined by plurality vote, the Top 3 vote-getters will each win one of the open seats in November.

The municipal election

is set to take place on Tuesday, Nov. 5, between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. at Blairsville City Hall.

"Terms of office will begin Jan. 1, 2020, and will expire on Dec. 31, 2023," according to a notice that ran in the newspaper recently.



Katy Jones of Union County Family Connection with Assistant Superintendent Dr. Paula Davenport in the Aug. 20 school board meeting. Photo by Mark Smith

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