

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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Paris, Dyer and chamber to honor victims, heroes of 9/11 on Friday

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
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This Friday, Sept. 11, will mark the 19th year since 19 al-Qaida terrorists hijacked four American passenger flights to carry out the single deadliest terror attack in history, resulting in the deaths of 2,977 innocent people.

These terrorists flew three of the planes loaded with people directly into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon – buildings that were also full of people – and the fourth flight, headed for Washington, D.C., was forced to the ground by American heroes who prevented further death and destruction.

The mode of attack and resultant loss of life at the hands of a hate-filled ideology that fateful day caused a global shift in the way America and her allies think about security. At home, the attacks caused a wound that will never fully heal.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, many Americans have promised to "Never Forget." In an effort to live up to that promise, Union County Government has teamed up with the Fire Department and Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce to host their annual 9/11 public remembrance.

The remembrance will take place Friday at 9 a.m. on the upper ball field of Meeks Park, which will allow plenty of social distancing for people worried about COVID-19. All comers are encouraged to attend.

Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and local Emergency Management Agency Director/Fire Chief David Dyer will offer comments to honor the fallen, including the 412 first responders – the firefighters, police officers and emergency medical professionals – who died rescuing people.

"9/11 is very important to me," Dyer said. "I had no real connections. But as a firefighter, it was one of those things that demonstrated what a firefighter is and how a firefighter works."

"I'm going to speak on this some (Friday), but those guys knew that this was going to be the call of their career. They had, I can imagine, excitement and a little bit of fear, the unknown, and they all were thinking, 'This is something I'm going to sit down and tell my grandkids one day.'"

"And in the back of their mind, they also had the idea of, 'Wow, this could be that call – that call that ends my life.' I was very fortunate to sit down with (9/11 firefighter) Jay Jonas. He was in one of the towers when it collapsed."

"The most significant thing he told me was, when the second jet hit, they were in



New York firefighters worked tirelessly to extinguish flames at the site of the collapsed World Trade Center towers on Sept. 11, 2001.

Photo Courtesy of the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

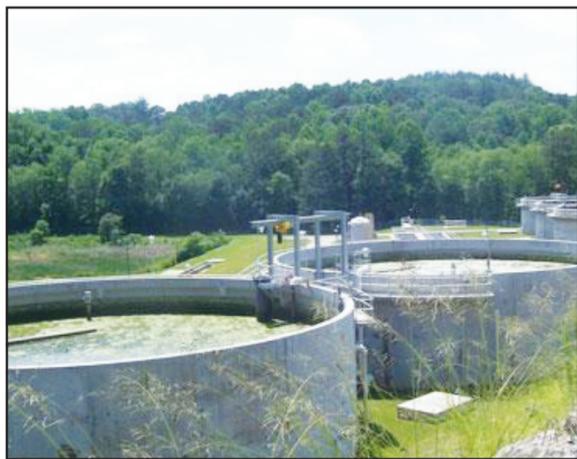
City Council votes to cease leachate treatment at sewer plant

By Shawn Jarrard
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In the Sept. 1 teleconferenced regular city meeting, Blairsville City Council members approved a motion by Mayor Jim Conley to discontinue acceptance and treatment of leachate at the city's sewer plant, citing "concerns of the mayor and council regarding leachate."

The local treatment of out-of-town landfill leachate has caused quite a bit of controversy in recent weeks, after members of the Lake Nottely Improvement Association brought wider attention to the practice.

Leachate is known to



The Blairsville Wastewater Treatment Plant features a state-of-the-art computerized system that ensures the plant is always fully operational.

Photo/City of Blairsville

Blairsville PD raises \$17,000 for Shop with a Cop for Christmas



Local law enforcement and community members teamed up Saturday to hold the Second Annual Rubber Duck Derby on Butternut Creek.

By Jarrett Whitener
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

For the Kentucky Derby – the Blairsville Police Department held the Second Annual Rubber Duck Derby on Saturday, Sept. 5, to raise

money for its Shop with a Cop for Christmas program benefiting underprivileged local kids.

This year's race featured 500 more ducks than in 2019, so enthusiasm was especially high Saturday, as spectators

lined the banks of the Butternut Creek in the Union County Farmers Market with hopes that their duck would be the first of 1,700 to cross the finish line.

"Last year was our first year, and we didn't know what

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GBI investigating fatal shooting in Union County; no charges filed



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At approximately 10:45 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 6, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation's Regional Office

in Cleveland was requested to assist the Union County Sheriff's Office with a shooting investigation in the area of Mahaffey Place in Blairsville.

During the investigation, it was determined that the shooting resulted from an incident between Panfilio Giammarco, 48, and Marion Joseph West Jr., 63, of Blairsville.

Giammarco was shot

and transported to the local hospital, where he later died. A GBI Medical Examiner was expected to conduct an autopsy on Giammarco after press time on Tuesday, Sept. 8.

No arrests have been made in the case. Upon completion of the investigation, it will be provided to the Enotah Judicial Circuit District

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Lance retires from Post Office after four decades on the job

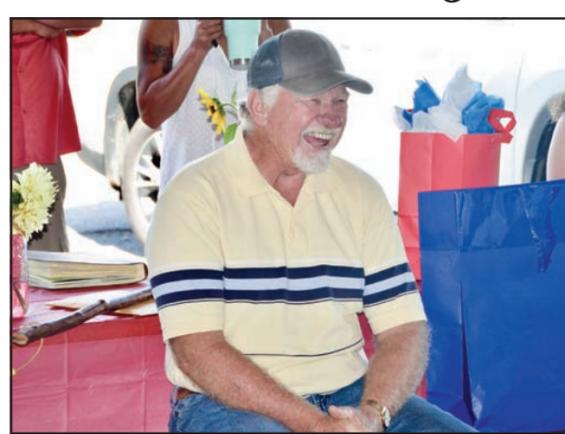
By Jarrett Whitener
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Friends, family and coworkers of Bobby Lance gathered at Meeks Park on Aug. 30 to celebrate his commitment to and retirement from the U.S. Postal Service.

Lance has worked with the Postal Service for 41 years, more than 32 years of which he has driven the same route – Rural Route 5 – through Old Blue Ridge Highway, Skeenah Gap and around the Jones Creek area.

"I started on Jan. 29, 1979," Lance said. "It has been wonderful, and it has been a

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Retiring mailman Bobby Lance shared many a good time with friends during his Aug. 30 retirement party at Meeks Park.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

Blue Ridge Mountain EMC names Brinke interim general manager

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YOUNG HARRIS – The Board of Directors of Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Membership Corporation announced last week that it had named Erik C. Brinke as Interim General Manager of the co-op.

Brinke will succeed outgoing General Manager Jeremy Nelms, who has accepted a position as CEO of Flint Energies in Warner Robbins. Nelms' last day with BRMEMC is Friday, Sept. 25,

and Brinke will serve in the interim position while the board develops a plan for naming a permanent replacement.

"I am encouraged that we have been able to call on one of our own to continue the co-op's important work while the board develops a plan for hiring a new general manager," BRMEMC Board President Ray Cook said. "We are confident that Mr. Brinke's extensive co-op experience will afford us the time we need to make the best

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Erik Brinke

State Superintendent Woods tours schools to visit staff, students



Georgia Schools Superintendent Richard Woods, center, took a tour of Union County Schools last week, stopping in at UCHS and the primary school on Sept. 3.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

By Shawn Jarrard
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Union County Schools received a welcome surprise last week upon learning that State School Superintendent Richard Woods wanted to swing in for a visit, and Woods and his wife Lisha arrived Sept.

3 wearing masks and ready for temperature checks.

They'd already visited schools in South Georgia and the metro area in recent days and were touring North Georgia schools Thursday. And the pair of educators were excited to start their tour of facilities here.

Local Superintendent John Hill introduced Woods to his board staff members and department heads, and the group traveled to the high school to meet with custodial, nutrition and nursing employees, whom Hill described as frontline workers keeping faculty and

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