

Vaping...continued from Page 1A

got a head start on the vaping scene about three years ago, when a student used a device to vape at the high school.

Teachers confiscated the device, figured out what it was, and made sure to include it in the student handbook as prohibited on campus moving forward.

According to state law, the purchase of e-cigs by anyone under the age of 18 is illegal, though even students who are old enough to buy them are barred from bringing e-cigarettes and similar contraband on campus at Union County Schools.

Standard vape juice is most commonly consumed using pre-packaged e-cigarettes, which are readily available for purchase at many local retail stores.

E-cigarettes come in many shapes, sizes and brands, and the most popular e-cig brand on the market is JUUL, pronounced "jewel." Many kids who vape refer to the use of JUUL e-cigs as "JUULing."

"JUUL became available for sale in the United States in 2015," according to the CDC. "As of December 2017, JUUL is the top-selling e-cigarette brand in the United States."

"News outlets and social media sites report widespread use of JUUL by students in schools, including in classrooms and bathrooms."

"All JUUL e-cigarettes have a high level of nicotine. According to the manufacturer, a single JUUL pod contains as much nicotine as a pack of 20 regular cigarettes."

There's even a new style of e-cigarette available that's shaped like a USB flash drive, and its use is gaining momentum among children due to its incognito form factor.

And because most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive and can harm brain development, especially in adolescents, medical experts believe that "young people who use e-cigarettes may be more likely to go on to use regular



Union County Schools Police Officer Chad Berry at the Sept. 20 regular meeting of the Union County Board of Education.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

cigarettes," according to the CDC.

On Sept. 12, Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb issued a statement revealing that youth adoption of e-cigs and vaping had "reached nothing short of an epidemic proportion of growth."

"E-cigs have become an almost ubiquitous – and dangerous – trend among teens," said Gottlieb. "The disturbing and accelerating trajectory of use we're seeing in youth, and the resulting path to addiction, must end. It's simply not tolerable."

"I'll be clear. The FDA won't tolerate a whole generation of young people becoming addicted to nicotine as a tradeoff for enabling adults to have unfettered access to these same products."

Next steps for the FDA include the implementation of greater enforcement measures against those who sell e-cigs to minors, as well as the possibility of limiting flavors that appeal to children, among other steps.

In the meantime, it's important that parents "talk to their children about the risks of e-cigarette use," as recommended by the CDC. And Union County Schools Superintendent John Hill could not agree more with this sentiment.

"The PD and the school administration have been working diligently to inform parents about what's going on

through conversations with kids and on social media," said Hill. "The schools have been really proactive."

"If they hear of a vape, they're going to investigate, administer some discipline, and hopefully redirect the kid on what they've been doing."

Furthermore, Hill said the schools are currently looking at all options to help them deal with vaping and its associated dangers, and his office is planning a comprehensive approach to training educators on how best to address the issue with kids.

High School Principal C.T. Hussion is urging parents to be on the lookout for products that contain fruit pectin, such as SURE-JELL and CERTO, which can be purchased at local grocery stores or online and may indicate teen drug use.

"It's the stuff you make jelly with, they're mixing it with Gatorade and water and drinking it, and it's a three-hour cleanse," said Hussion. "It will totally clean them out within three hours for a urine test."

Added Hussion: "The other thing is Readi Cleanse. It looks like a 5-Hour Energy bottle, but they can buy that

pretty much anywhere, and it also is a detox."

"Basically, if they go out on a weekend night and come in on Sunday and chug two or three of those or some SURE-JELL, they will pass a urine screen."

Hussion said that, along with vaping devices and cigarettes, he and SROs confiscated some drug paraphernalia during the Sept. 13 parking lot walkthrough, such as smoking bowls for use with marijuana.

The good thing is, Hussion and the School Police Department are confident that, moving forward, the department's drug dog will be able to stay on top of any illicit drugs that come on campus.

"We're being extremely proactive with it," said Hussion. "I feel like we're starting to make some headway as far as us and the police and the parents beginning to get information that, really, everybody's been behind on."

"The kids knew everything about all this stuff, but the adults didn't. Now, it's going the other way."



All this – tobacco and nicotine/vaping products – was confiscated from about six vehicles, mostly just sitting in plain sight, in a recent walkthrough of the Union County High School parking lot.

Crash...from Page 1A

induced coma to keep the swelling down, according to family posts.

Initially, doctors were keeping him "in a paralytic state so that hopefully his brain could rest," and by early Monday morning, they were trying to wean him off some of the medicine to increase brain activity, according to family posts.

"Lassiter has been stable all night after the decrease in medicine," said Heather Held Green, Lassiter's mother, in a post on Monday, Sept. 24. "They will continue to decrease the pentobarbital throughout the day as tolerated. Other sedation meds will be added."

"Please continue to pray that the pressure in Lassiter's brain diminishes! We are ever so grateful for everyone's support."

The Georgia State Patrol investigated the accident that occurred on Georgia 325 shortly after 7 a.m. that Thursday, however, an official report was not available by press time.

Along with GSP, Union General EMS, the Union County Sheriff's Office, Air Life Georgia medical helicopter, the Union County Fire Department and Fire Chief David Dyer responded to the scene.

"We got a call for a



Rescue personnel, including Air Life Georgia 14, at a landing zone established at the Union County Saddle Club Arena that Thursday morning.

motor vehicle accident at approximately 7:30 this morning," said Chief Dyer on Thursday. "One vehicle with possible injuries that went out into a field."

Added Dyer: "When we got there, the vehicle was approximately 200 to 250 feet off the highway. It went out into a pasture. It had significant damage on the passenger side where it looked like it'd hit a tree."

First responders worked on Lassiter as the medical chopper made its way to the landing zone at the Union County Saddle Club Arena, after which he was airlifted

to a trauma center, according to Chief Dyer.

Since his accident, Lassiter's youth football team and countless others have expressed their support in the community, and the family asks that prayers continue.

"Please continue to pray harder, stronger, louder!!!" said Green in a Sept. 22 post. "I know our God is all knowing, all healing, ALL EVERYTHING, and Lassiter is in his hands. Thank you for all the love and support that has been spread upon us. Will update again when possible."

2018 Sorghum Festival Parade Route



The 2018 Sorghum Festival Parade will be held Saturday October 14th 2018 at 11:00 AM.

This years parade will be honoring our local farmers. The theme for this years parade is **"OUR LOCAL HEROES" IN MEMORY OF MASTER SERGEANT ERIC ENGLAND.** This is a good opportunity for churches, organizations, and businesses to memorialize and remember our local heroes.

NO APPLICATION IS NEEDED TO ENTER PARADE!!!

We will be giving cash prize donations for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place float winners. This is a great way for Non-porfit organizations, local charities and churches to raise funds. Business and personal floats are welcome to participate and will be given the choice of what local charity or organization they would like to donate prize money to, should they be chosen as a winner.

(We will no longer be doing categories such as civic, church and commercial.)

PRIZE MONEY IS FOR PARADE FLOATS ONLY.

(Floats will be judged on their creativity, amount of work involved, and how well it represents the parade theme.)

Prize Donations are as follows:

1st Place Float - \$300 • 2nd Place Float - \$200 • 3rd Place Float - \$100

Meeting place for the parade is still at the "Old Middle School Gym". Floats must be registered at entry of the ball field and complete by 9:00 AM. Judging will begin at 9:30 AM. We appreciate your continued support of The Blairsville Sorghum Festival. Please help us get the word out in the community about the chance to win prize donation for local organizations, churches and charities. This is one way we are able to help the community and at the same time have a great parade for all those dedicated to the tradition of coming out to enjoy the Blairsville Sorghum Festival Parade.

No apparent opposition to new Verizon cell tower

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Earlier this year, Celco Partnership Inc. locally advertised a legal notice proposing to build a 199-foot monopole communications tower in the vicinity of Pat Colwell Road near Georgia 325.

Basically, Celco Partnership Inc. – better known by its other name, Verizon Wireless – is wanting to build a new cell tower off Pat Colwell Road.

All environmental studies and required paperwork have been duly conducted and appropriately filed, and Jennifer Alewine, an attorney representing Verizon, appeared at the first hearing held at the Union County Courthouse on Thursday, Sept. 20.

The hearing was held to gauge public response to the proposed new 5G tower. Currently, Verizon is testing 5G in California, and it will be available in other markets in the latter half of 2018, according to the company's website.

A Verizon Wireless representative in Alpharetta said the new tower would greatly improve cell phone and data service for Verizon Wireless



Jennifer Alewine, an attorney representing Verizon, in a public hearing at the Union County Courthouse on Thursday, Sept. 20.

Photo by Mark Smith

customers within an average radius of 7 to 10 miles around the cell tower.

In the hearing, Paris said that in his first year in office, he brought together a group of knowledgeable Union County residents, some of them engineers, and, with their help, created the county ordinance that addresses cell towers and antennas.

That ordinance remains

in effect today.

Paris said cell towers can reach as high as 250 feet, though the Union County ordinance restricts cell tower height to 190 feet, which is under the 200-foot limit set by the Federal Aviation Administration that would require it to have flashing lights.

Monopole construction, as opposed to latticework construction, is also a Union County ordinance requirement.

The tower will actually be 199 feet tall, just under the FAA limit, with the triangular antenna array attached to the top, but the tower itself will be within the 190-foot ordinance requirement.

"We've tried to be proactive in protecting the public, but we've also tried to be proactive in making sure that Union County didn't get passed over as a place that had good cell service and good signals," said Paris. "Today more than ever, it's critical that we have – and this is going to be the future – as good a cell service as we can bear and work with."

Paris said most of the rumors about cellular signals causing cancer and people being electrocuted near them have

See *Verizon*, Page 8A