

Sorghum Festival...from Page 1A

all that people can see at the festival this year, however. There will also be the traditional mountain folk games all four days of the festival, including biscuit eatin', pole climbing, log sawing, rock throwing and horseshoe pitching.

All of the games, or contests, will have age categories.

"Over the past 15 or 20 years at least, the max amount of biscuits that's ever been eaten is probably in the mid-teen range," said Aaron

Dills, a member of Blairsville Sorghum Festival Club. "The wow factor is, 25 or 30 years ago, a gentleman named Nick Georgopoulos from Murphy, North Carolina, managed to put away 42 biscuits.

"How he was able to do that is beyond me."

Dills said that there used to be a tobacco spitting contest included in the Sorghum Festival games that was phased about around 2005.

"Not tobacco, but 'baccar – that's mountain slang for tobacco," Dills said.

In addition to all of that, there will be a great many vendors with arts, crafts, displays and lots of food, not to mention the gallons and gallons of sorghum that will be

made and sold on-site by local sorghum makers.

"The big thing about the Sorghum Festival is that the sorghum itself is what the Sorghum Festival is about, because it's sorghum cane, it's not sugarcane," Dills said.

Dills further explained that the sorghum syrup is made the old-fashioned way at the festival.

They grind the locally grown cane stalks right in Meeks Park to get the juice, and they use a 16-by-3 woodfired copper pan to cook the juice down into syrup.

"It's a natural sugar, it doesn't have any additives or preservatives or anything," Dills said. And a jar of sorghum syrup made at the festival will last for decades. "It doesn't ruin."

Moving along, Dills said the Blairsville Sorghum Festival was originally held on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays the last three weekends in October, though they had to cut it back to just Saturdays and Sundays on the second and third weekends in October for lack of help.

"The fact is, the Blairsville Sorghum Festival is run by a group of volunteers who do not receive any compensation for what they do, and we don't look for recognition," Dills said.

Many of the participants who helped put the event on



Pole climbin' is just one of the many games and competitions held during the Sorghum Festival each year.

the map back in the '70s, '80s and '90s have grown too old to keep it going, so it's now up to the newer folks to carry on the tradition.

"Anyone that's out there that wants to participate and become a member of this small organization, we are very open," Dills said. "It's not a secret society or anything like that."

"If you want to come and hang out with us and do a little bit of work and contribute to your county, we welcome you.

"It's contributing mainly back to the county in ways such as the new Meeks Park sign and scholarships for Union County High School students," said Dills, all of which is financed with Sorghum Festival proceeds.

The Blairsville Sorghum Festival Club helps many other causes and people in Union County as well, but little is heard about their efforts because club members seek no recognition, though they're always there to lend a helping hand.

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very expensive.

P2P is asking the city to consider a permit to allow the treated water to be discharged directly into the sanitary sewer system. Brown said it would take up to two years to get the site completely clean.

After acknowledging recent public concern over the city's decision to start processing wastewater from landfills outside the county, Mayor Jim Conley said he wanted to proceed with caution to avoid public confusion over the issue.

He said he would contact other municipalities P2P had contracted with for similar services before polling council members on the project prior to the next council meeting.

In other council news, Managing Member Edward Oravetz of Magnolia Greene Development LLC requested that the council approve annexing a 9.189-acre lot near the intersection of Glenn Gooch Bypass and Cleveland Street into the city.

Oravetz said that much of the reason for the request was access to lower water and sewer rates.

The mayor expressed concerns about the impact a high-density development at that location would have on traffic, and Council Member Mary Ruth Cook shared her doubts about approving annexation without knowing what sort of development the company had in mind.

Oravetz mentioned that both single-family homes and multi-family buildings had been considered by the development company, but he couldn't say what they had in mind other than it would not be a low-income type of development.

After much discussion, Conley and the council agreed to table the issue until Magnolia Greene Development LLC could be more forthcoming about their plans for the property.

As previously reported, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris instituted a 120-day moratorium on applications for multi-family unit development within the county on Aug. 6.

Moving along, Greg Owenby, who owns a 5-acre parcel of land behind Walmart across Wintermute Drive, requested access to city water and sewer through Walmart's service lines. Owenby has 2 acres on Kiutuestia Creek Road as well that he might want to add.

The issue is that the 5-acre parcel is in the Coosa Water Authority District, though Owenby said he had spoken with Coosa Water and they were agreeable to giving the city rights to provide water and sewer to that parcel.

Council members agreed to work with Owenby in the future and suggested that he move forward with his plans to access the city water and sewer lines.

The council unanimously approved an invoice in the amount of \$55,000 from Colwell Construction Company for additional hydroseeding following obstruction clearing at the Blairsville Municipal Airport.

This \$55,000 invoice will be included in a future Georgia Department of Transportation contract for reimbursement.

The council unanimously approved two invoices in

wireless broadband and cellular reception in the city.

A majority of the council approved the ordinance, with Council Member Mary Ruth Cook voting nay.

The council unanimously approved the hiring of Jenny Rhodes and Brody Brackett as part-time Blairsville Police Officers to replace two officers who left the department. Rhodes is the first female police officer to join the Blairsville Police.

Conley proclaimed Oct. 23-31 as Red Ribbon Week, encouraging Americans to wear a red ribbon to show their support for a drug-free environment.

Indian Summer..from Page 1A



The students of Woody Gap put on a particularly good Cherokee Drama for the 2019 Indian Summer Festival.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Of course, none of the weekend's festivities would have been possible without the Woody Gap Sports Club, the Suches Fire Department Station 5, and the many volunteers from the community.

"We have to thank the Woody Gap Sports Club for putting it on and the volunteer Fire Department for keeping things running smoothly," Cantrell said. "The Fire Department parked cars for free, and it was really nice of them to do that for everyone. We wouldn't be able to hold this event without everything they do for us."

Cantrell made sure to thank the officers of the Woody Gap Sports Club as well, including Larry Wood, Jerry Wood, Angie Moose, Garland Moose, Jeff Harkins and Susan White.

Woody Gap Principal

Carol Knight was also grateful to those involved in the festival, adding additional thanks to Union County Schools, the School Police Department and the Union County Sheriff's Office.

The Indian Summer Festival is held every fall behind the Woody Gap School during the first full weekend in October. The Run Above the Clouds is held on the morning of the festival's opening day.

For additional information on the Indian Summer Festival and more happenings in the Suches area, visit www.suches.com.

Anyone interested in participating in next year's race can visit www.runabovetheclouds.org to keep up with all of the important registration dates and relevant information.