

# North Georgia News

2 Sections 24 Pages

Hometown Newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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## True glass recycling comes to Transfer Station

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
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Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris is pleased to announce that the Transfer Station has gotten several upgrades recently, most notably a brand-new pulverizing system for true glass recycling at the local level – only the second such system in operation statewide.

The county offers three locations for household trash and recycling: the main facility and Recycling Center at 348 Transfer Station Lane, plus two Convenience Centers, one at Georgia 325 off Highway 515, and the other on Moccasin Road.

For years now, residents

have been able to recycle #1 and #2 plastics, cardboard, aluminum, paper, steel cans and appliances, saving customers money by allowing them to dispose of these materials for free separate from other household garbage.

The county actually makes money selling the recyclables, the proceeds of which go right back into the maintenance and operation of the Transfer Station.

And while glass has been free for people to drop off as well, disposing of it has been an extra expense to the county – and to the environment.

Demand for glass recycling has been high, which is why the Transfer Station began collecting it several years

ago. But the county was unable to find a recycling vendor to take the glass, requiring it to be transferred to a landfill alongside other trash.

In addition to costing money, hauling glass to landfills creates a situation where something that can be reused takes up valuable space instead.

According to Transfer Station Director Matt White, landfills have been closing for years because they are running out of room, so recycling has become that much more important.

Fortunately, Paris never gave up on developing an environmentally friendly solution for glass that also

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Commissioner Lamar Paris, Transfer Station Director Matt White and County Manager Larry Garrett posing in front of the sand collection area at the Transfer Station's new Glass Recycling Center. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

## Akins, Groves donate family quilt top from the 1800s

By Daysha Pandolph  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

In the historic Butt-Mock House just off the Blairsville Square last Thursday, Oct. 19, Bud Akins met with Union County Historical Society President Mickey Cummings and others to donate a 127-year-old quilt to the organization.

The quilt holds the stories of many generations, starting with Akins' grandmother Mary Jo Rodgers, who pieced the top of the bedspread together in 1896.

Its story continued most recently with Akins and his sister Vivian Groves, who donated the quilt, and the Mock House volunteers who finally completed it just this year: Kathleen Cook, Jayne Jones, Dorthy Hughes, Linda Floyd and Julie Sgambati.

On Thursday, the

finished quilt was displayed alongside a photo of Mrs. Mary Jo Rodgers, who used fabrics ranging from men's suits to old blankets to craft what would become the beginning of a century-long project.

"We've had this cover forever since my grandmother died," Akins said. "She did all that stitching herself, but it never was made into a quilt. So, me and my sister got a hold of it and donated it to the Historical Society, and the quilting ladies finished it."

The group of women responsible for completing the project all work as volunteers for the Mock House, utilizing quilting as a source of income for the museum. The money they generate from quilting projects goes directly into funding the house, Mock House Director Kathleen Cook said.

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Mickey Cummings, Bud Akins, Kathleen Cook, Dorthy Hughes, Julie Sgambati, Jayne Jones, Linda Floyd and Presley Rich posing with the beautiful 127-year-old quilt. Not pictured: Vivian Groves. Photo by Daysha Pandolph

## Halloween festivities sure to scare up community interest



Like last year, the Blairsville Boo Bash at Meeks Park will be hosting a Halloween costume contest for youngsters. Photo by North Georgia News/2022

By Brittany Holbrooks  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Halloween's coming to the mountains again, and with it, many fun activities to get the ghosts and goblins out a-haunting. Whether your favorite part of the spooky holiday is dressing up in funky costumes or listening to ghost stories, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Young Harris College will have its annual Fall Festival

from 5-7 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 26. Out on the campus lawn, the Office of Campus Life and Student Activities will set up Halloween-themed games, trick-or-treating activities and plenty of photo ops.

Admission is free, but this year, the college encourages visitors to bring canned and non-perishable foodstuffs for donation to local food pantries.

Also Oct. 26 is the Third Annual Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Truck-Or-Treat from

4:30-7:30 p.m. in Young Harris. Along with a smorgasbord of sweet treats, Southern Sips Lemonade will be there to offer multiple flavors of fresh lemonade made with local produce.

Vogel State Park's annual Fall Festival will fall on Saturday, Oct. 28, this year – the perfect event for families looking to fill an entire day with fun fall-themed activities. Park campers will be decorating See Halloween Festivities, Page 7A

## Code of Ordinances changes discussed in public hearing

By Shawn Jarrard  
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A public hearing for two proposed amendments and a new addition to the Union County Code of Ordinances occurred inside the courthouse on Thursday, Oct. 19.

Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris opened the hearing, quickly turning things over to Assistant County Attorney William Mercer.

Mercer introduced the amendments and ordinance, reading each before giving the roughly half dozen attendees from the public a chance to ask

questions and offer feedback.

First up was the amendment to the Alcohol Ordinance to allow for extended New Year's Eve hours regarding the serving of alcohol by temporary special event license holders, barring laws governing Sunday serving restrictions.

A local winery asked for the extension, and the Alcohol Board in turn requested that the ordinance be revised, Mercer said. The revision changes the time to stop on-premises consumption of alcohol from 11 p.m. on Dec. 31 to prior to

See Code of Ordinances, Page 2A



William Mercer  
Assistant County Attorney

## Homeless man arrested after alleged crime spree; no bond

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

A string of crimes on the west side of the county Oct. 15-16 had Union County Sheriff's Office investigators searching high and low for their suspect last week.

They nabbed him on Tuesday, Oct. 17, after an off-duty deputy spotted him outside of the Young Cane Lodge building off Nottely Dam Road.

Paul Brewster, 46, of Blairsville, was arrested and charged with obstruction of a law enforcement officer,

two counts of vandalizing a place of worship, entering an automobile, two counts of burglary in the second degree, probation violation – all felonies – plus three misdemeanor counts of criminal trespassing, and possession of less than an ounce of marijuana, also a misdemeanor.

Additional charges will be forthcoming, UCSO Capt. Daren "Bear" Osborn said.

At the time of his arrest, Brewster was on probation for previous convictions of burglary in the first degree and obstruction of a law

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Paul Russell Brewster

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# Quilt Donation...from Page 1A



Mary Jo Rodgers began piecing the quilt in 1896.

Photo/Submitted

Cook was approached by Akins about the project earlier this year, and when he mentioned that he had the beginnings of a quilt from the 1800s, she didn't hesitate to accept the offer. With the help of her team, Cook was able to complete the quilt in about two weeks.

"I purchased a sheet to put on the back and I purchased a padding," Cook said. "It has three layers, but (it was done) one stitch at a time because you couldn't put two stitches on the needle."

"My grandmother always said, 'Listen, young lady. If you can't get 10 stitches on the needle you're not a quilter!' But I put one stitch at a time. That was as much as we could do because it was so thick and the fabric

was so old."

Normally, the group can finish a quilt in about two days; however, working with such antique material required unusual techniques.

"It was the hardest thing I've ever quilted," Cook said. "It was very hard to sew, but they didn't do the quilting (like we do). Like the padding we put in it – back in those days, they would just lay it on top of an old blanket and sew it like that."

"But (making the quilt) was a treat," Cook concluded. "I never imagined being a part of anything like this."

The quilt will hang on a wall in the annex of the Butt-Mock House from this point forward, where it will be given a nametag and a written story in the days to come.

# Code of Ordinances...from Page 1A

1 a.m. on Jan. 1.

The second proposed revision to the Code of Ordinances pertains to locally regulated Tattoo and Body

Piercing Establishments, which are effectively prohibited in the county.

Specifically, the revision excludes from the definition of "tattoos" cosmetic procedures by health care professionals to enhance eyebrows and lips with temporary dyes.

A resident disagreed with the prohibition on tattoo and body piercing establishments, and Mercer countered that people wishing to receive a tattoo or body piercing may do so in any number of neighboring municipalities where such activities are allowed.

Moving on, Mercer read the details of the proposed new ordinance regarding the establishment of Commercial Firing Range Facilities, which are already subject to federal and state regulations and will be subject to local regulations after enactment of the new ordinance.

Last month, Paris imposed a moratorium on the establishment of commercial ranges to give his office time to draft an ordinance regulating them; the county is unaware of any such facilities established here to date.

The moratorium and proposed ordinance have come after safety concerns lodged by residents who believe that a commercial range may be operating or in the works, though, again, the Commissioner's Office is unaware of any such facilities being planned or constructed.

Still, Paris wants to get something in place to allow the county to enforce nuisance prevention and safety measures in the event of such developments, to include both indoor and outdoor commercial

range facilities.

Regulations include stipulations on lot size (100 acres minimum), the inclusion of vegetative buffers, proximity and positioning relative to other properties, hours of operation, site plan submission, etc. Ordinance violations would potentially result in citations, fines and even arrest.

Proposed in the ordinance are restrictions specifically on Commercial Firing Range Facilities that will not impact First Amendment activities by private citizens or the future operation of the county's public target range that is currently being constructed off Georgia 180.

A woman who lives near the property that several residents suspect might be hosting a commercial range attended the meeting to express her concerns over the safety of adjacent homeowners, including her elderly father.

The property in question is listed as residential in use and sits on less than 2 acres, according to the county, and it has not been established that the property is actually hosting a commercial range.

"If it's a commercial establishment," Mercer said, "then if they're not following the guidelines we set in the local law, you need to contact the Sheriff's Office or the Commissioner's Office and lodge your concerns, and it would be looked into."

Mercer went on to say that enacting a commercial range ordinance would enable residents to file private nuisance suits against operators violating the ordinance, thereby providing an additional redress opportunity.

"And of course, anytime someone puts your life in danger, I advise you to call the Sheriff's Department and file a complaint," he said.

Responding to a complaint that the county did not appear to be listening to residents' concerns, Mercer said he believed the county had been very responsive, pointing to the drafting of the new ordinance to regulate activity that had not previously been subject to local regulations.

Another resident asked that the proposed ordinance be amended to include backstop specifications to better protect neighboring properties; that operation times be removed in favor of "dusk till dawn" language; and that consideration be given to limiting higher power firearms.

The resident also recommended that the ordinance be considered by a committee of people with relevant expertise before enactment.

Copies of the proposed amendments and ordinance can be obtained at <https://www.unioncountyga.gov/>, and residents may offer feedback and suggestions any time prior to their enactment.

The amendments and ordinance addition received first readings in the Sept. 21 regular county meeting, and the Commissioner's Office will be scheduling a called meeting in the coming weeks for second readings so that enactment may take place.

Following the public hearing, Paris hosted his regular county meeting, coverage of which will appear in an upcoming edition of the newspaper.

# Crime Spree...from Page 1A

enforcement officer. His bond has been denied, and he remains in custody at the Union County Jail. He is listed as homeless.

The Sheriff's Office became aware of the alleged crime spree after responding to Gooch Trucking off Old Blue Ridge Highway the morning of Sunday, Oct. 15, Osborn said.

A truck driver reported that an air fryer, electric grill and other items had been stolen from his personal vehicle while he slept in his nearby big rig.

Surveillance footage from the scene captured the culprit in the act, which led deputies to identify Brewster as their suspect based on prior run-ins with law enforcement. As it turned out, Brewster had removed the items from the truck and stashed them in a nearby field, Osborn said.

"The next thing I knew, we started getting reports left and right out on Blue Ridge Highway," Osborn said.

Aspen Hearth & Home, located in the same general area, reported that some copper and other items had been stolen that same Sunday. Again, deputies found the items stashed near the business, Osborn said.

On Monday, Oct. 16, another business owner on Blue Ridge Highway reported that his building had been broken into, and a review of surveillance equipment showed Brewster using the facilities to wash his clothes and take a shower, Osborn said.

"We searched for him all day Monday and found nothing – they looked everywhere," Osborn said. "Tuesday morning, we didn't get in the office good and get sat down before the Saddle Club property manager called."

The bathrooms at the Union County Saddle Club off Nottely Dam Road had been entered, the paper products and soap removed, and the women's shower used. Also, obscenities had been scrawled on the stalls in the women's restroom, Osborn said.

Once more, deputies

recovered surveillance footage placing Brewster at the scene, and this time, they also discovered personal belongings he left there, Osborn said. The stolen toiletries were found on the property.

"We came back to the office (that Tuesday), and I said, 'We're not going to rest until we catch him,'" Osborn said. "So, we started hitting the places where I knew he had a past, and he'd been at these places in the last day or two."

"We went to the convenience stores, and they'd all seen him because he'd been hanging around. Well, we had a call come in from Pleasant Grove Baptist Church."

The church cemetery had been the site of a weekend funeral by Mountain View Funeral Home. Someone at the church noticed that the canopy used in the funeral was on the ground, and the funeral home responded, only to find that all but the canopy canvas had been taken.

Additionally, a deacon discovered a basement window had been shattered in the church in the same time frame that the canopy parts went missing, Osborn said.

Based on the details of the other crimes that had happened in the area, deputies decided to look near the property for the missing canopy parts, finding them as expected. That's how they connected Brewster to the Pleasant Grove Baptist

Church theft and vandalism, Osborn said.

A resident on Blue Ridge Highway also reported that someone had removed items from her backyard and taken food from an outdoor fridge, and Brewster has been charged with that crime as well, Osborn said.

Brewster was finally taken into custody the afternoon of Tuesday, Oct. 17, after an off-duty night-shift deputy on his way to take some trash to the Convenience Center on Highway 325 saw him hanging out at the Young Cane Lodge building near the Saddle Club Arena, Osborn said.

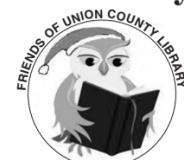
And while no one else was present at the building, the Sheriff's Office confirmed that nothing had been disturbed there by the time deputies arrived.

"Everyone worked great together – the CID, Narcotics and Patrol divisions," Osborn said of the all-hands-on-deck approach to finding Brewster before he could commit additional crimes. "And Lt. Doug Brackett's shift was spot on."

Mountain View Funeral Home Owner Charles Long said he was grateful to the Sheriff's Office for quickly recovering the stolen canopy parts, which were found and returned in about 30 minutes: "That was spectacular."

"I'd just like to commend them for doing a great job," Long said. "I think it's fantastic."

# Friends of Union County Library Annual Everything Christmas Sale



Advocating for Libraries, Literacy, and Lifelong Learning

Yes, it's that time again. If you like to put up your tree and decorate early, you won't want to miss this sale! All our items are inexpensive and we

have a lot! Dishes, lights, garlands, ornaments, stockings, centerpieces ... you name it. All the funds we raise go to support the library, reading programs and the summer programs, as well as many other literacy issues.

So come out, Friday, November 3rd from 10 AM to 4 PM and Saturday, November 4th from 10 AM to 2 PM, get some deals and help us help you!

# Glass Recycling...from Page 1A



**Transfer Station Director Matt White operating a backhoe to transfer recycled bottles into the “surge hopper” of the new glass pulverizing system.** Photo by Shawn Jarrard

saves the county money. Enter the new glass recycling system, which has been up and running at the Transfer Station since the beginning of the month.

It works like this: glass bottles dropped off by residents at the Recycling and Convenience Centers are taken to a new collection area to await transfer via backhoe into a “surge hopper” that feeds the bottles in a controlled manner onto a conveyor belt.

The conveyor belt moves the glass up to a “pulverizer” that breaks it into small and fine pieces before it is sent to a “trommel,” or rotary screen, that smooths the glass and separates it from trash like labels, cans, plastic and other items that make their way into the initial collection.

From there, the pulverized glass is sifted into separate storage areas making up the final product: sand and larger bits called “gravel,” all completely free of sharp edges.

For now, the county will be using the sand and gravel on local projects, for example, replacing much of the mulch at county facilities with the glass recycled by residents, and spreading it on county roads during icy weather, with both applications producing a cost savings to the county.

When enough people learn about the new system and the volume of recycled glass increases, Paris said the county can begin to sell the sand and gravel commercially, producing yet another revenue

stream for the Transfer Station.

Once ordered, it took about eight months to obtain the equipment due to ongoing supply chain issues, with the new system and installation costing \$210,000, paid for with voter-approved SPLOST collections and revenues generated by commercial and residential trash customers.

“Because of SPLOST and the revenue that we’re able to generate here at the Transfer Station, no property tax money is having to be used to continue operations and make improvements,” Paris said.

And the county fully expects to recoup the cost and then some for the new pulverizer from the savings the recycled glass brings with no more hauling for landfill disposal, replacing other materials the county would have to purchase otherwise, and eventually selling it commercially.

“We’re saving the environment, we’re saving money, and we’re getting to use the product,” County Manager Larry Garrett said. “That’s a win-win-win deal.”

Other recent improvements at the Transfer Station include expanded paving and a metal awning over the Recycling Center collection windows to keep people dry in rain or snow as they make multiple trips to drop off their different recyclables.

Residents have taken note, too, of the clean, user-

friendly environment at the Transfer Station, which has seen a marked improvement in customer service since the county took over from Waste Management two years ago.

Dropping off garbage and recyclables last week, resident David Harper said he and his wife “love” the convenience and atmosphere on offer during their weekly visits to the Transfer Station.

“We’ve been coming over here for 11 years, and it has improved,” Harper said. “It’s clean, it’s paved, and it’s organized. I don’t have any complaints about this facility whatsoever.”

Looking ahead, Paris anticipates that in a couple years’ time or sooner, the Recycling Center will be able to take all recyclable household products, including #3 through #7 plastics that are not currently being accepted for lack of storage space.

The commissioner credits county employees Garrett, Purchasing Agent Pam Hawkins and Transfer Station Director White with expanding the recycling options for residents, and he thanks hard-working employees like Johnny Holbrooks for assisting in the Recycling Center.

Be sure to grab one of the free keychain magnets the Transfer Station is handing to customers to help people tell the difference between steel and aluminum cans when sorting their recycling at home.



**Union County’s glass pulverizing system is only the second such setup operating in Georgia.** Photo by Shawn Jarrard

## Union County Fire Department receives Local Community Grant



**Union County Fire Department has been awarded a Local Community Grant**

Union County Fire Department has been awarded a Local Community Grant from Walmart in the amount of \$3,500.

The funds from this grant were used to purchase household items for the newest fire station, Station 13. This new career fire station, which

is located on Hwy 129 North, is scheduled to open soon.

The items purchased with this generous grant from our local Walmart store included items such as televisions, kitchenware, dishes, pots, pans, and even toilet brushes and plungers.

We want to say a special

thank you to store manager, Tim Brown, for sponsoring this grant. In the past Walmart has sponsored other grants and have provided funds for many other items for the department. Union County Fire Department appreciates the support from community partners such as Walmart.

# Halloween Festivities...from Page 1A



**Nottely Marina owners Moriah and Shane Doucette love hosting their annual Halloween event for local families.**  
Photo by North Georgia News/2021

their sites, and judges will check them out later that evening close to nightfall.

Earlier in the day at 10:30 a.m., vendors will set up shop, and just shy of lunch at 11 a.m., food trucks will be available.

Free hayrides start at 1 p.m., and 2 p.m. marks the beginning of the cakewalk. People who want to participate only need to pay \$1 per person per round. That said, it costs \$5 to purchase a rubber duck for the rubber duck race starting at 4:30 p.m.

Vogel campground trick-or-treating kicks off at 5:30 p.m. and will run until about 7 p.m. Finally, when a harvest sundown marks the thinning of the veil between this world and the next, folks will gather at Possum

Holler for ghost stories.

First Baptist Church of Blairsville, located at 296 Blue Ridge Street, will be hosting its own annual Fall Festival on Oct. 29. Putting an intriguing spin on the concept of “trunk-or-treat,” First Baptist will instead offer “trunks of treats” out in the parking lot starting at 4 p.m.

Free hot dogs, popcorn and photo ops will be available alongside candy and plentiful prizes, and the smallest ghouls can enjoy a bouncy house.

By far the most popular local Halloween attraction for families is the Blairsville Boo Bash, a tradition going back years. In times past, it decorated the town square, but now, located in Meeks Park, there’s room to roam –

and more importantly, safer environs away from traffic.

The fun starts around 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 31, to last until 7 p.m. Entry is free, and be sure to come dressed in your spooktacular best to participate in costume contests for multiple age groups. Prizes will be available for the most frightfully creative outfits.

Folks who aren’t there for trick-or-treating are welcome, and the Chamber of Commerce encourages anyone wanting to hand out or donate candy to let them know at 706-745-5789. Food trucks will be available to either eat dinner in the park or take home with the night’s candy haul.

Similarly, a free showing of “Monsters, Inc.” will be playing in the park, courtesy of Mountain Life Real Estate. Popcorn will be available – also for free – and, weather permitting, the movie will start at 6:45 p.m. Be sure to bring blankets and lawn chairs to the Sorghum Field.

And returning for three frightful nights of trick-or-treating fun will be the annual Halloween event at Nottely Marina, Oct. 29-31 from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at 86 Doucette Circle.

The free event will feature 13 haunting trick-or-treat stops full of treats and tricks for the kiddos, and residents are encouraged to “get dressed up and join the Halloween festivities.”

Happy Halloween, Union County!

## Fire Safety Tips for Halloween

Halloween is a favorite special day for many adults and children alike. Make it not only a fun day, but a safe day.

Cornstalks, crepe paper and many other Halloween decorations catch fire easily. Put your displays out in the open yard away from your house, porch or deck. Use a battery operated candle or glow-stick in your jack-o-lanterns. If you do your decorations inside for a party, be sure your smoke alarms are

working, and again, use battery candles. Keep all exits from the house free from decorations, so nothing blocks escape routes.

When choosing a costume for your child, stay away from trailing material (tripping and falling down is no fun) and cut bigger eye holes if a mask is needed. If walking in the neighborhood, give your child a flashlight.

Make this a really great, and safe Halloween.