

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Winter Weather Preparedness Week

It's hard to believe that it is December but here we are, knocking on the door of winter. The winter season means different things to different people. Some enjoy the cooler temperatures. Others love the holidays. Most enjoy the occasional snow that covers our beautiful mountains.

When emergency management thinks of winter, we think of being prepared and so should you.

Union County Emergency Management/Fire Department would like everyone to join them in recognizing Winter Weather Preparedness Week. Winter Weather Preparedness Week, December 2nd through 6th, is a time to think about various winter weather subjects and start preparing.

The week starts by learning the different winter weather hazards that may be in Georgia. There can be a wide spectrum of winter weather in Georgia depending on temperatures and elevation. Our county is one of the most diverse areas due to both. The weather can include rain, snow, ice, and bitter cold.

The week continues with Winter Weather Terminology. Staying informed on winter weather is important. When a winter weather alert is issued, people need to understand the difference between the alerts. A Winter Weather Watch is usually issued 12-48 hours prior to an event and means significant winter weather is possible. A Winter Weather Advisory is usually issued 36 hours before a weather event with 80 percent or greater chance of winter precipitation. A Winter Weather Warning is usually issued 36 hours prior to the event and means a significant winter storm is imminent. Warnings are associated with danger to life and property.

The rest of the week concentrates on general preparation for winter weather and driving tips. Winter weather may include power outages and hazardous roads. The family should prepare to stay at home, possibly without power, for at least three days. To prepare, you will need supplies and a Ready kit. A Ready kit includes non-perishable food, water (one gallon per person, per day), flashlights, batteries, weather radio, and first aid kit. Other things that you may want to consider are medications, pet food, cash money, and games for the kids.

Driving is extremely dangerous during winter weather

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



A Simple Thing

Someone invited Phillip Johnson's daughter to attend Vacation Bible School at a local church. Though an agnostic at the time, he became interested in what she learned.

He was raised in a Christian home but had never considered the evidence for faith. He graduated at the top of his class at Harvard and clerked for U.S. Chief Justice Earl Warren. He was a professor at UC Berkeley law school when, prompted by his daughter, he investigated and found the gospel credible. He believed.

Some year later he became bored with his career. But he reacted with interest after seeing Richard Dawkins' comments about evolution. Johnson said, "The rules of argument seemed to be structured to make it impossible to question whether what we are told about evolution is really true. The very persons who insist on keeping science and religion separate are eager to use their science as a basis of pronouncements about religion." One of Dawkins' pronouncements was, "It is absolutely safe to say that if you meet someone who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, insane, or wicked." Johnson described that sentiment as the "zeal of Darwinists to evangelize the world by insisting that even non-scientists accept the truth of their theory as a matter of moral obligation." Johnson perceived that the basic problem with the argument for Darwinism was that it relied on the assumption of blind and purposeless origins of the universe, rather than on scientific evidence.

So he set out to spotlight the problems with that logic in his seminal book, "Darwin on Trial" (1991). Critics harshly panned the book, but it helped launch the intelligent design movement in academics. Casey Luskin explains, "The idea of intelligent design became a magnet for scholars from a variety of fields: biology, chemistry, physics, philosophy, theology, law. All of whom saw Darwinism's fatal reliance on naturalistic thinking." Notable proponents of intelligent design include Luskin (geology, law), Michael Behe (biochemistry), William Dembski (mathematics), Ann Gauger (zoology), and Stephen Meyer (geophysics, philosophy).

John Lennox, mathematics professor at Oxford, summarized

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. What is the 2020 Census?

A. The 2020 Census counts every person living in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the five US territories.

Q. When will the Census begin?

A. The first mailing of Census information will occur between March 12 through March 20 of 2020. Follow up reminders will continue until you respond and end the last week of April 2020

Q. How do we make sure we participate in the Census?

A. Simply respond when you get the first mailing while it is fresh in your mind. The longer you wait to respond the more likely you are to forget. If you haven't responded by the end of April, then the census workers will start knocking on your door.

Q. Why do we conduct this count?

A. The census provides data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers, and many others use to provide daily services and support for our community. The results of the census also determine the number of seats each state will have in the US House of Representatives, and they are used to draw congressional and state legislative districts. The census is specifically mentioned in the Constitution. Article 1, Section 2, mandates that the country conduct a count of its population once every 10 years. The 2020 Census will mark the 24th time that the country has counted its population since 1790.

Q. What does that mean for Georgia and Union County?

A. The federal government allocates over \$675 billion to states based on the population for health care, food, education, and roads. The following programs use census data to drive funding: • Federal Medical Assistance Programs • The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program • Medicare Part B • Highway Planning and Construction • The Federal Pell Grant Program 21 Georgia's rural assistance programs received more than \$1.4 billion annually. Based on the George Washington University report Counting for Dollars 2020, Georgia receives more than \$2,300 per person annually in funding directly related to census count allocations.

Q. So, does this mean that if the population of Union County and Georgia is not accurate it could decrease our

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Did You Know...

Prevention is about advancing knowledge and understanding of the risk associated with drug and alcohol use. The goal of prevention programs is to deliver the facts and provide resources to people in hopes that they can avoid the pitfalls of substance use and abuse. Prevention programs are not just for children, adolescents and teens. Every person in our community benefits from substance abuse education and resources.

Drugs are abuse are evolving and becoming more accessible and they are often purchased legally at the local convenience store.

Not all drugs use can be detected in over the counter drug screens that you can buy at the pharmacy or big box stores.

Synthetic drugs are just as addictive and as potent as illicit street drugs purchased from the local drug dealer.

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The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.



Chamber of Commerce

Has anyone seen Santa? I've heard from a good source that he will be at the Union County Community Center this Saturday from 9 - 11 a.m. I would like to thank United Community Bank and the Junior Board, Chick-fil-A, Keller Williams and all the other Sponsors of Breakfast with Santa. We will have breakfast provided by Chick-fil-A, plenty of games and, of course, pictures with Santa.

The Community Center is looking like a Winter Wonderland with all the decorated trees, wreaths and gingerbread houses. Be sure to come by and vote for your favorite. This year we will have Fan Favorite, Most Creative, Most Traditional and many more! Our members have gone all out with their themes and decorations. These trees must be seen to be believed. The trees will be on display from December 1 - 31. So, bring the kids and vote for your favorite. YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THESE TREES!

Christmas is a wonderful time of year in

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

A Carbon Bill That Helps Most Americans

Dear Editor,

Since first being introduced, a carbon fee and dividend plan has caused much concern about its economic effects on American citizens. Now, yet another independent study has evaluated its effects. Earlier this month, economists from Columbia University released a study on the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, HR 763. The study confirmed that "average low- and middle-income households receive more in dividends than they pay in increased economy-wide prices." This now marks the fourth study that has shown that such a plan actually benefits the low income and much of the middle income people in America. Previous studies by the US Treasury Department, Regional Economic Modeling Inc, and Resources for the Future have all shown similar results.

Realizing that such a plan still causes much controversy, I know of no other solution to climate change that grows our economy, helps Americans economically, does not cost our government one red cent, uses a free market solution, and decreases carbon emissions by 90% by 2050. I ask readers to at least consider this plan.

Vernon Dixon, MD

Book of Hope

Dear Editor,

Have you ever read a book that just held you spellbound at every turn of a page? A book that inspired you to greater heights, one that challenged you to be better than you ever thought possible. A book that gives us all instructions of how to live a life worth the living. A book about the ups and downs of life and how to stay out of trouble and even walk upright in all of your ways. A book that unfolds the mysteries of the whole universe and that tells you who created all things. A book that can change your way of thinking and give you eternal life, if you accept its truth. A book that has the power to save humanity from its sins and make a believer into a child of God. A book of everlasting mercies, grace and love, and how you can obtain it all by the mere mention of His Name.

This amazing book called the Bible was inspired by the Spirit of God from the beginning of time to the end of time, and it is worthy of all praise and glory. A book that promises to change you from a sinner, into a saint, if you will just believe upon the Name of Jesus Christ. No other book in history can make these claims and stand behind them with all of the promises of God that are as solid as the rock of ages. The only book of hope at the end of your life that can fully guarantee you a place in heaven compared to a place in hell, if one chooses not to believe in the death, burial and resurrection of the only true living God of hope, the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Frank F. Combs

Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are the wake-up call we need to hear. I write this article every year because it is about something most of us take for granted, but smoke alarms can be the most important appliance we have in our homes, and we need a reminder each year to check our smoke alarms and make sure they work. That annoying little twitter that we hear is a reminding us that it is time to change smoke alarm batteries, not to disable them because the noise is annoying. Most of us use alarm clocks to wake up in the morning and if we miss it, we are just late for work, but a more important wake-up call we need to hear can save our lives and is a smoke alarm.

When a smoke alarm detects smoke, it emits a shrill sound that as my granddaddy said, "could wake the dead," which in the case of a house fire is critical so we don't become one of those. Most deaths in house fires are caused by smoke inhalation as it overtakes its victims who never wake up.

A smoke alarm can give us a head start so we can survive a house fire. Smoke alarms are installed on ceilings where smoke will gather first, and the alarm will sound to alert us before the lethal smoke moves down to claim lives. We should have smoke alarms in each bedroom in the house so when a fire starts, and smoke begins to flow along the ceilings we can be alerted to the danger and escape.

Smoke alarms provide a critical early warning of fire, allowing additional time to escape. National estimates of reported fires show that in 2011-2018, fires in homes with no smoke alarms caused an average of 940 deaths per year. An additional 510 people per year were fatally injured in fires in which smoke alarms were present but failed to operate. Power source problems were the leading cause of smoke alarm failures. Hardwired smoke alarms were more likely to operate than those powered solely by batteries. In reported home fires in which the smoke alarms were present but did not operate, almost half of the smoke alarms had missing or disconnected batteries. Nuisance alarms were the leading reason for disconnected smoke alarms.

The risk of dying in reported home structure fires is cut in half in homes with working smoke alarms. Installing smoke alarms is the first step, but it is most important to be sure they are working. Half of the home fire deaths resulted from fires reported between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when we are usually asleep and not aware of what is going on around us.

Statistics show that the percentages of

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RC&D Executive Director
Frank Riley



A Real Mountain Man

We've all known people that we admired and wished to be like. As a young man, I remember reading books about men such as Daniel Boone and David Crockett. It is said of Crockett that he was so tough he could grin a bear out of a tree and kill it just by grinning at it. After I received my first gun, I can remember sneaking through the woods trying to emulate what these two would have done to find game. The most I had to fear in the way of wild game were the squirrels which enjoyed fussing at me as I snuck along the banks of Turkey Creek.

There were other Mountain Men of which I read, like Kit Carson, Hugh Glass, Jim Bridger and a fellow by the name of "Liver Eating Johnson." These Mountain Men were trappers by trade and braved the perils of the Rocky Mountains and enjoyed the freedom of which very few of us have ever dreamt. There was a movie made about Hugh Glass. The story is centered around the fact that he was attacked and nearly died from a mauling by a grizzly bear. He was left for dead by his comrades and survived by eating buffalo carcasses killed by wolves. He walked for many miles out of the wilderness to get revenge on those which had left him for dead.

Another man, Jeremiah (Liver Eating) Johnson was a trapper which moved into the mountains somewhere around Denver. He was married to a Shoshonee woman which was later killed by warriors of the Crow tribe. As a result, Johnson fought one on one battles with the best warriors of the tribe for many years. He struck terror in the hearts of his enemies by eating the liver of those he killed in battle.

T. O. was a man I coon hunted with in my youth. He along with my Uncle Bud were my heroes. We coon hunted all over the Sipsey Wilderness on mules. I admired him because he knew more about the woods than anyone I knew. We could be in the bottom of the deepest hollow in North Alabama on the darkest night of the year without a flashlight and he could find his way out. I remember asking him once if he'd ever been lost. He responded, "No. But once I was bewildered for three days."

His Daddy was a moonshiner back in the Depression. My friend helped his Daddy and learned about every single hollow in the Sipsey Wilderness. He knew about the bluffs along Thompson Creek, and he had logged the big woods along the Sipsey River. T.O. was one of the nicest men you'd ever want to meet. However, a dark cloud would come over him when he talked about the man which murdered his Daddy

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Green in Winter

Most of the landscape around is brown or is turning that way. Some weeds are coming up since we have cooler weather that make the ground dotted with green. Let's talk about these weeds and how to identify them. We'll also discuss different ways to control them.

Henbit, common chickweed, and speedwell are all annual weeds. The issue with winter weeds is that they can slow down the growth of desirable plants in the spring. The winter weeds are bigger and stronger than other low growing plants early in the spring. This size advantage means they shade desirable plants around them and use the nutrients that are in the soil. This can lead to difficulties with summer weeds, because the winter annuals reduce the competitiveness of your desirable plants.

Henbit is a weed that is in the mint family, Lamiaceae. You can easily tell the mint family because the plants have opposite leaves and a four-sided stem. If you roll the stem between your fingers, you can feel the ridges on each side. The leaves for henbit attach directly to the stem. It has small pinkish-purple flowers at the top of the plant that are in a tube shape.

Common chickweed is another plant that has opposite leaves. Chickweed has small white flowers and is in the Caryophyllaceae family, commonly called the carnation family. It usually grows about 3-6 inches tall. The seeds from chickweed can remain viable for up to 10 years. There are a couple of different species of chickweed out there. Mouseear chickweed has hairy leaves and stems.

Speedwell is a clumping plant that has very small bluish-purple flowers. It grows in patches up to one foot in size. The upper leaves on speedwell are narrow, while the lower leaves are more rounded. It is in the Scrophulariaceae family, which is also the family that has weedy plantains. There are several different species of speedwell, but they all have the same general characteristics.

When controlling weeds it's best to start by looking at your site. Knowing the pH and nutrients that are in your soil by taking a soil test through your local extension office is a good place to start. Then think about the drainage of your site. Sloped sites will drain more quickly. Does the soil need mulch to maintain soil moisture and add organic matter? If your site is in good condition and properly cared for and you are still having weed issues, then it might be time to start thinking about using an herbicide to control weeds.

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Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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