

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## Tactical Combat Casualty Care

The fire department is responsible for responding to many types of emergencies. Each firefighter must be familiar with each of these emergencies and attend training in order to better respond. Unfortunately, an active shooter event is one of those possible emergencies. An active shooter event is a high profile, multi-casualty event that requires special training. To better prepare for an active shooter event, Union County Fire Department hosted a Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) class for firefighters and local public safety emergency responders.

The TECC course teaches responders how to respond to and care for patients in a civilian tactical environment such as an active shooter event. The students were a diverse group of people who may be responding to or dealing with tactical or active shooter events. These included law enforcement, firefighters, emergency medical responders, nurses, educators, managers, leaders, and many more.

Developed by NAEMT's Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) Committee, the Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) is based on the guidelines from the Committee on Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (Co-TECC) and the Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) program. TECC uses lessons learned from our military and applies them to the civilian world of tactical medicine.

This three day, 24-hour course covers topics designed to decrease preventable death in the tactical situation. Topics include hemorrhage control; surgical airway control and needle decompression; strategies for treating wounded responders in threatening environments; caring for pediatric patients; and techniques for dragging and carrying victims to safety.

The course also provided training on how to operate on an emergency scene. Students were taught the responsibilities and tactics of contact teams, rescue task force teams, triage teams, collection points, and command. Students were placed in these roles during several realistic scenarios to better reinforce their training. Some students were taken out of their field and comfort zone to be placed in different roles in order to better understand the different points of view. However, the main focus of the training was to oper-

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**Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief**

David Dyer



## A Lighter Burden

What will the new year hold? One thing is for sure - it will be different than the past year. I don't know about you, but I'd like to travel lighter this coming year.

Let's stipulate that 2022 delivered dispiriting events on the national and world scene. If those burdens weren't enough, you have your own freight to carry. Life can make you feel deserted, hurt, lonely, or hopeless. Your burdens intensify if you have marginalized the God of the universe. Life's burdens are evidence for this piece of theology: This is a fallen world, enslaved to corruption (Rom. 8:21). The good news is that you can travel lighter.

That's what Tennyson expressed with these verses: "Ring out the old, ring in the new. Ring, happy bells, across the snow; the year is going, let him go. Ring out the false, ring in the true. Ring out false pride in place and blood, the civic slander and the spite. Ring in the love of truth and right. Ring in the common love of good." These sentiments from 1850 express the cry of our hearts today.

People who travel heavy with burdens rightly yearn for the new, the good, the true. It's true that that life is less about what happens and more about how you react to it. You can manage the burdens you carry. To that end I offer three truths, actually blessings, which will help you travel lighter in the new year.

1. You are valuable to God. He made you in His image and renews you by faith in Christ Jesus. It is, as C. S. Lewis wrote, "almost incredible and only possible by the work of Christ, that any of us who really chooses, shall find approval, shall please God. (You are) loved by God...delighted in as an artist delights in his work"! If God is for you, who can be against you (Rom. 8:31)?

2. Your life has meaning. Having a central organizing purpose for life is your reason to stand strong. The highest and most sublime purpose is not to possess things, but to know God. "I count all things as loss," Paul wrote, "in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ" (Phil. 3:8). To know God is to have everything.

3. You are created for community. Poet John Donne tells us

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**All Things New**

Wayne Fowler



## Commissioner's Questions

**Q. When does the Winter season officially begin?**

A. For 2022, it began Wednesday, December 21 and ends on March 20, 2023. Similarly, the winter solstice, which marks the astronomical first day of winter in the Northern Hemisphere and also marks the shortest day of the year, was recognized on Dec. 21, 2022.

**Q. What kind of predictions are being made about Winter weather for 2023?**

A. According to various resources (Weather Trends and the Farmers Almanac), average temps for January will average 20-35 degrees and the highs will average 45-55. Average temps for February will be a low of 20 and a high of 60. The long-range comparison shows that southeast Winter temperatures will be about normal on average through mid-February. Precipitation is predicted to be about normal - especially as January rolls into February.

**Q. Sometimes snow feels different. Sometimes it feels colder than other times. Why does it feel that way?**

A. When snow falls, it is referred to as either a wet or a dry snow. Snow that falls when the temperature is very cold - usually below 28 degrees - would be classified as a dry snow. This type of snow is light and fluffy. This is typically the type of snow you always see in Colorado and it is great for skiing. Snow that falls when the temperature is a little warmer - usually 30 to 35 degrees - would be classified as a wet snow. This is the type of snow we often have here. A wet snow is wet to the touch and is great for making snowmen and snowballs since it packs so well. This type of snow also sticks to tree limbs and powerlines causing power outages all over north Georgia.

**Q. What is the difference between a dry and wet snow in relation to the difficulty the county has in getting and keeping the roads clear?**

A. Dry snow quickly packs on the roads and highways and becomes very difficult to scrape off with our trucks. Normally we spread gravel and salt to help melt the snow to make it easier to remove. The biggest problem is that when cars and trucks drive over the snow, it packs it down. When this happens, it becomes

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**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**

Lamar Paris



## Habitat for Humanity

Looking forward into the New Year, we must reflect on where we are and where we want to be. Betterment of ourselves begins with goals for our future as a roadmap to follow, and define what we want our life to be.

At Habitat, we want our homeowners to be successful. Our philosophy behind a 'Hand Up', not a 'Hand Out' will clear up several misconceptions about a Habitat home. The homes are not free but kept close to cost in order to provide an affordable mortgage for families. Potential homeowners are qualified for a 502 USDA home loan program, which requires a credit score of 640. Qualified applicants' total income does not exceed 80% of the Area Median Income of the county. (Township County \$51,280; Union County \$54,400.) Perspective homeowners also must require the need for safe, affordable housing.

Selected families become a partner with Habitat, helping themselves along the way.

See Habitat, page 5A

**Habitat Happenings Executive Director**

Charlotte Randall



## Letters to the Editor

### God's Calling

Dear Editor,

I have been a Christian for 30 years and I have failed God many times in my walk with Him, and every time I let God down, He would come alongside me and tell me to get back in the game and that He still loved me. That kind of love only comes from a heavenly Father who knows my weaknesses, knows my struggles, knows my longings and my shortcomings, yet still loves me with an everlasting love into eternity.

I think of the story in the Bible about the apostle Paul who once was persecuting Christians and having them killed for their faith, but then God turned Paul's world of evil upside down when the Lord encountered him on the Damascus Road and brother Paul became a diehard fan of the Lord Jesus Christ thereafter. Did Paul have an easy life? Far from it. Yet in every situation he found himself, whether being in prison or shipwrecked or even left for dead, brother Paul stayed true to God's calling on his life and even rejoiced in his sufferings, because of his relationship with the Lord, God.

In my 30 years of walking with the Lord I can honestly say there was one man who I encountered at Walmart here in Blairsville who reminded me of brother Paul. His name is Sean Byers, a greeter at the front door, and I could sense by his speech that he too was a diehard fan of Jesus Christ. And the more I saw Sean when I went to Walmart, I would stop and chat with him and listen of how much he truly loved his Savior and Redeemer.

Brother Sean passed into glory last month, but his testimony lives on in the hearts of those who knew Sean, and we thank God above for sending him here though for a short season.

See Combs, page 5A

### Tis The Season To Remember

Dear Editor,

The birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

His two greatest commandments—"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and love your neighbor as you love yourself."

The less fortunate, and be ready and willing to lend a helping hand.

To speak words of healing and to abstain from sowing discord and division.

To be kind to one another and be willing to forgive others as Christ forgives us.

Mountaintop experiences are great, but we all learn more from the valley experiences of life.

To acknowledge we are all God's children, His people, and the sheep of His pasture.

Gene Vickers

## Christmas Tree Fires

It's that time of year again where we decorate our homes with hot lights and flammable decorations, and we climb on anything available to hang these things around the house. Those of us who are past our "prime" don't bounce very well anymore so before we decide to decorate our house, find a fearless teenager and who thinks they are bullet proof to climb up on the ladder to hang the decorations.

Homes are made of all kinds of "fuel" and a dry Christmas tree with hot lights is just kindling. Here is my annual reminder about the increased risk of home fires and injuries during the Christmas season. US fire departments responded to an estimated average of 160 home structure fires per year that began with the ignition of Christmas trees. These fires caused an annual average of two civilian deaths, 11 civilian injuries, and \$12 million in direct property damage. Fires that begin with the ignition of Christmas trees are a very small but notable part of the US fire problem. These fires account for less than 0.1 percent of reported home fires, 0.1 percent of home fire deaths and injuries, and 0.2 percent of direct property damage resulting from home fires.

Although the number of home fires beginning with Christmas trees is small, it is significant if you consider that these items are generally in use for a short time each year and are not present in many homes. Not surprisingly, three-quarters of the Christmas tree fires occurred in December or January. The longer a natural tree is kept up after Christmas, the more likely it is to dry out and ignite. Christmas tree fires are more common between 3 p.m. and midnight accounting for half of the fires. Another 26 percent of the fires occurred between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Approximately two out of every five home Christmas tree fires started in the living room, family room, or den. These fires also accounted for three out of four injuries (73 percent) and over half of the direct property damage associated with Christmas tree fires (55 percent). Electrical distribution or lighting equipment was involved in more than two out of five home Christmas tree fires (44 percent). This equipment included lamps, bulbs, or lighting (19 percent), wiring or related equipment (19 percent), and cords or plugs (6 percent). Heating equipment accounted for another 13 percent of these fires, particularly space heaters (6 percent). Electrical failure or malfunction (34 percent) and heat sources placed too close to trees (20 percent) led to more than half of the home Christmas tree fires. The misuse of a material or product led to almost one

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**RC&D Executive Director**

Frank Riley



## Wyatt and John

John Cummings was my great-grandfather, and Wyatt was his father. Wyatt's father had moved the Cummings clan to North Alabama soon after the Creek Indians were defeated at Horseshoe Bend. The battle was a decisive one for Andrew Jackson and his band of Tennesseans. Wyatt had not been married for very long when South Carolina fired the first shots on Fort Sumter. After this event, states across the South held Secessional Conventions to determine whether to stay in the Union or secede from the Union.

Alabama held their convention in Montgomery. Wyatt Cummings and the other people of Winston County elected a man by the name of Chris Sheets to represent them at the convention. The people of Winston County were settlers and homesteaders in Winston County. There were only a handful of plantations in the county, and most people did not own any slaves. So, in an overwhelming vote, the people of the county decided that Chris should vote against secession at the convention. All the people of Winston County wanted was to remain neutral. They empathized with their brothers in the southern part of Alabama. But, the thought of fighting to maintain the right to own slaves was something the people of Winston County didn't understand.

During the first day of the secessional convention, Chris Sheets was not allowed to speak. When he tried to speak, he was thrown into jail and beaten for his stance on the subject of secession. Chris was held in the jail in Montgomery during the entire convention and was only turned loose when the convention ended. He went home battered and bruised as well as feeling he had failed. As you know, Alabama did secede from the Union and the War Between the States began. Many of the planters who had vigorously supported secession and war did not want to fight and began paying others to fight in their place during the war. Soon the state created a Home Guard to help protect the interest of the citizens of Alabama.

One of the objectives of the Home Guard was to encourage the enlistment of young men into the fighting ranks of the Confederate Army. At first the Home Guard was a decent group of people and they protected local interests. But, soon most of the Home Guard became part of the main army. As a result, the Home Guard became infiltrated with rogues and less desirable men. In Winston County the Home Guard began to terrorize the very people they were supposed to protect.

Wyatt's neighbor was a man known only as Uncle Billy. One day the Home Guard came to his

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**Around The Farm**

Mickey Cummings



## Chamber of Commerce

Thanks to all the businesses, organizations, and individuals that participated in 2022 Tour of Trees. This year's tour was the biggest ever, and the Tour gets more creative each year. The Tour is more than just walking, looking around, and seeing which tree or wreath is the prettiest. It is more about experiencing how the many trees impress you with their Christmas spirit.

The winners of this year's Tour are:

Most Creative - Maple Ridge Creek; Most Traditional - Lucretia Collins Team with REMAX; People's Choice Small Tree - Maple Ridge Creek; People's Choice Large Tree - SAFE Pet Project; People's Choice Wreath - City of Blairsville; People's Choice Gingerbread House - Granddaddy Mimm's Distilling Co.; Best Traditional Gingerbread House - Willingham Sisters.

Congratulations to all our winners! Thank you to everyone who came by and to those that

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**Blairsville - Union County Chamber President**

Steve Rowe



## Cold, Cattle, and Horses

With cold temperatures well upon us I wanted to take some time to talk about livestock needs in cold weather. Cold temperatures mean that animals require more energy to maintain their body temperature, ice can become a problem, and the way that you care for your animals will change some.

Windbreaks can help reduce the affect of cold winds on animals and therefore improve the "feels like" temperature. Cattle are generally cold tolerant and are comfortable down to 20 degrees. Horses are generally comfortable down to about 18 degrees. Horses can be blanketed when temperature get low to help them handle the cold. It's best to use a well-fitting blanket. As these animals are using more energy to stay warm, be mindful of how much energy you are providing them in feed. Building a shelter for animals to take cover in is also a great way to help keep them warmer.

It's best to have abundant feed available to help animals maintain body temperature in cold temperatures. If the total digestible nutrients (TDN) of your hay is low, there may not be enough energy in the hay to sustain the animals for a long period of time. High quality hay has a TDN of >58%. Low quality hay is 45 to 52% TDN. A simple hay test will tell you the TDN of your hay. Cattle and horses don't have unique vitamin requirements during the winter compared to the rest of the year.

Body condition scoring (BCS) is important to monitor during the winter. BCS is a tool to help you evaluate the health of your animal, and determine if they getting enough feed and energy. The scoring ranges from 1 to 9. 1 is severely emaciated, and 9 is extremely obese. 5-6 is generally the desired score for cattle, while a score of 5 is ideal for horses. On cattle that are 5-6 the spine and the ribs are not visible and the tailhead and brisket have no fat. On horses a 5 will have a level back, the ribs are not visible but can be felt, the withers are rounded, and the shoulders blend smoothly into the body. Animals that are too fat or too thin can have health issues. In the cold maintaining a good BCS will give you a healthier animal.

Outdoor water tanks will need to be cleared of ice under extended cold conditions. Cattle need about 1 gallon per hundred pounds of weight during cold weather. A 1000-pound horse will need 10 to 12 gallons of water each day in the winter. In the growing season grasses contain lots of water that horses can use to satisfy their water need. However, in the winter horses eating dry hay will need to drink extra water. If the wa-

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**UGA extension Watching and Working**

Jacob Williams



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even more difficult to remove with our snow plows. However, this type of snow also gives you a little better traction with your vehicle; you can drive on it easier. A wet snow usually melts upon contact with the roads surface. In this particular case, the wet snow makes for easier and more efficient road clearing – as long as dropping temperatures don't create additional hazards in the form of ice. When it does, it is very dangerous. Please stay off these roads if at all possible.

### Q. Are most of our snowstorms wet snow?

A. Temperatures are the driving factor behind the types of snow we get in north Georgia. Historically for many years, we rarely had dry snow. However, the past few years most of our snow has been dry

because it has been colder snow with colder temperatures.

### Q. We often have to drive in the snow. What types of things should we consider when running errands in the Winter time?

A. Please do not drive in snow unless it is absolutely necessary.

B. If you have to drive in snow, (1) Make certain your tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread. (2) Keep at least half a tank of fuel in your vehicle at all times. (3) Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area, such as a garage, and (4) Do not use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface, such as on ice and snow. These are just a few things that come to mind when planning to drive in a wintery mix.

## Habitat... continued from Page 4A

Willingness to partner and putting in 'sweat equity' is part of the process in becoming a Habitat Homeowner. Sweat Equity can be working on their home, volunteering in the Restore, or performing administrative tasks in the Habitat office.

Last week, Southstate Bank and Habitat hosted a financial wellness seminar at our local Southstate Bank. USDA loan originators from Clarksville were also in attendance, to explain their programs offered. Eddie Temple, Assistant Vice President Branch Manager of Blairsville, stated that three participants from the seminar had contacted him to begin the

process of working on their credit score. The strive to begin this work is what Habitat looks for in potential homeowners.

As we leave 2022 and enter into 2023, let us go forward making the decision to be fully responsible for our life. Success requires taking the actions necessary to lead to positive results. Mistakes will be made, and at times lead us out of our comfort zone. It is impossible to learn, grow, and achieve goals in a static position.

Learning from failure will ultimately lead to success, and willingness to learn is the key.

## Chamber... continued from Page 4A

voted. We have had roughly 1,700 people come and view the Trees and Gingerbread houses during the first half of December. The Tour of Trees will end on December 31st, so if you have family coming for Christmas, bring them by the Community Center to see all the wonderful trees.

If you are interested in entering next year's tour, keep an eye on the Chamber's website or social media, as the tour fills up quickly. We hope you had a Merry Christmas and hope you have a Happy New Year!

Remember, thanks to all of you, "Life is better in Blairsville"!

## Combs... continued from Page 4A

God has a way of sending folks into our lives like the apostle Paul and brother Sean who bless us, who encourage us to keep our faith in God and to give us hope that a better day is coming soon for us who believe in a cross that can and will change your life if you surrender everything over to the Lord and let Him lead your steps down that narrow path

that leads to glory.

Yes, life here is tough, but the beauty of the next life to come will be one of complete harmony and peace if you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior. He's only a breath away, folks. Call out to Him today and come and be a child of God and be like brother Sean telling the good news of Jesus Christ.

**Frank F. Combs**

## Cummings... continued from Page 4A

house and told him he needed to enlist in the Confederate Army. He refused. So, the Home Guard hung him from a tree and left him for dead. His son found him and cut him down, and he lived through the ordeal. A few months later the Home Guard came back and found Uncle Billy still alive and still adamant about not joining the war, so he was hung a second time and lived through the hanging again. After the second hanging this tough old man lived another 30 years, although he always had a crook in his neck.

Uncle Billy became the poster boy for resistance in Winston County. Although the Home Guard was in control, most of the men of Winston County enlisted with the Union. Wyatt and his brother, Absolem, enlisted with the 2nd Tennessee Mounted Infantry in Savannah, Tennessee. Absolem never came home from the war. He died from dysentery while Wyatt came home to a community torn in half as a result of the war.

He found his wife and young family struggling. When he saw what had happened to his community, he moved his family to western Tennessee, where he lived out his days. However, his oldest son John never forgot Winston and Franklin County, and in the late 1870s he came home to the

mountains of north Alabama.

The men who hung Uncle Billy were hunted down and killed (in horrid fashion). Other men which used the war as an excuse to hurt other people were tracked all the way to Oklahoma and killed. Of course, all these killings were without judge or jury. The war tore Winston County apart and made legends out of common people. Jenny Johnson was one such lady which lost her husband and some sons due to the war. The choices she made in her quest for revenge influenced her family members' lives for years to come. Next week you will hear her story.

## Fowler...

### continued from Page 4A

"no man is an island." There's a reason the Bible emphasizes loving your neighbor. Shared burdens are lighter. With whom are you living life? Are you sharing the journey with other travelers?

Prepare for the new year by embracing what's right and true. Lighten your burden by receiving these blessings from God. As Isaac Watts wrote, "No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground. He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found."

## Riley... continued from Page 4A

in ten fires (9 percent), while abandoned or discarded materials or playing with a heat source each led to 6 percent of the fires.

Home Christmas tree fires have followed a distinct downward trend over the past 20 years, but with year-to-year fluctuations. Fires in this period ranged from a high of 280 fires in 2007 to a low of 130 fires in both 2016 and 2017.

There were 180 Christmas tree fires in homes in 2020. As expected, Christmas tree fires primarily occur in December (41% of total) or January (33%). Electrical distribution or lighting equipment was involved in more than two of five (44%) home Christmas tree fires, followed by heating equipment (13% of fires). As you can see from this data, there are many ways to start a fire in our homes and not just at Christmas, but all year long. A Christmas tree just adds more dry fuel to increase the risk of fire. The numbers seem small for the entire country but if that one fire is in your living room it makes the tragedy real.

Here are some tips from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to help reduce the risk of fire in our homes. Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant. Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both. Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.

Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged. Keep decorations away from windows and doors. Test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan. Keep children and pets away from lit candles. Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop.

I know that a lot of us leave our trees up for a while after Christmas; some just don't want to let the season go, or family members visit after Christmas, or some of us just don't get around to it as soon as we should. One of the most important safety tips when dealing with the old Christmas tree is to remove the tree from your home when it begins dropping needles, whenever that is, and dispose of it properly. Dried-out trees burn easily and should not be left in a garage or placed against the home.

Tests show that a dry Christmas tree can be fully involved in less than one minute. Always unplug or switch off

## Williams...

### continued from Page 4A

tering trough has frozen over the animals can't drink from it. The ice may need to be broken up with a hammer or have a heater put on the water.

If you have questions about the impact of cold weather on your animals contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

## Dyer...

### continued from Page 4A

ate as a rescue task force and to treat the victims.

The TECC class was sponsored and coordinated with our Region B Healthcare Coalition which covers northeast Georgia. Union County Fire Department would like to thank Region B for the class and Valkyries Austere Medical Solutions for the great instruction and helping us be better prepared for these types of emergencies.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

## Students named to North Georgia Technical College President's List and Honor Roll for Fall Semester 2022

North Georgia Technical College (NGTC) recently announced students named to the President's List and Honor Roll for fall semester 2022. The President's List recognizes full-time students with a 4.0 GPA. The Honor Roll recognizes full-time students with a 3.5 GPA. Full-time students are those taking at least 12 credit hours with no developmental courses.

Towns County students named to the Honor Roll include: Chawna Chipman Jones, Young Harris, Shampoo Technician; Sandra Morgan, Hiawassee, Business Technology; and Aneesa Speck, Young Harris, Cosmetology.

Union County students named to the Honor Roll include: Jonah Daniel, Blairsville, Air Conditioning Technology; Jaceyallen Elliott, Blairsville,

AS Degree in General Studies; Mia Genovese, Blairsville, Criminal Justice Technology; Julio Hermoso, Blairsville, Residential Wiring Technician Certificate; Isaiah Hernandez, Blairsville, Electrical Lineworker Certificate; Jennifer Kanady, Blairsville, Shampoo Technician; Kayla Lingerfelt, Blairsville, Criminal Justice Technology; Raquel Mendoza Lopez, Blairsville, Criminal Justice Technology; Cydney Rich, Blairsville, Shampoo Technician; and Larry Sturges, Blairsville, Accounting.

Towns County students named to the President's List include: Desten Belmares, Hiawassee, Electrical Lineworker Certificate; Caroline Cameron, Young Harris, Criminal Justice Technology; Caleb Clark, Young Harris, Air Conditioning Technology; Collin Crowder,

Hiawassee, Electrical Systems Technology; Victoria Figg, Hiawassee, Cosmetology; Madison Lovell, Young Harris, Pharmacy Technology; Tony Lynch, Hiawassee, AS Degree in General Studies; Alexander Mullins, Hiawassee, Networking Specialist; Todd Oakes, Hiawassee, Early Childhood Care & Education; and James Smith, Young Harris, Practical Nursing.

Union County students named to the President's List include: Mary Atkins, Blairsville, Criminal Justice Technology; Christy Cook, Morganton, Early Childhood Care & Education; Cassie Flowers, Blairsville, Interdisciplinary Studies; Miriam King, Blairsville, Business Management; Lydia Owenby, Blairsville, Cosmetology; and Jordan Swanson, Blairsville, Cosmetology.