

# Arbor Day commitment to future



Jennifer Queen, Jim Conley, Pat Smith, Marjorie Reach, Kay Bryant, Shirley Walker, Deborah Raleigh, Alan Denmon, Lou Ann Bleakley, Roy Fortenberry and Cody Rogers gather around the newly planted Dream Catcher Cherry in the Old Blairsville Cemetery to celebrate Arbor Day on Friday, Feb. 19

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

With their annual Arbor Day Proclamation, Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley and Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris have once again renewed their commitment to keeping the city and county green and tree friendly.

On Friday, Feb. 19, Mayor Conley met with Union County Clerk Jennifer Queen, members of the Blairsville Garden Club, and several other key players in the symbolic planting of a tree commemorating the 144th anniversary of National Arbor Day, and the day's 22nd year of observance in Union County.

This year's tree – a Dream Catcher Cherry – found a home at the Old Blairsville Cemetery, and Rangers Roy Fortenberry and Cody Rogers of the Georgia Forestry Commission were on hand to help Jordan Keen of General Supply to plant the tree.

The Forestry Commission acts as a go-between for the Blairsville Garden Club and the National Arbor Day Foundation, which in turn sponsors the "Tree City USA" program.

Gathered around the freshly dug earth on that windy Friday last month, Mayor Conley read the Arbor Day Proclamation for all who would hear.

"Tree and native plants are among our most valuable resources," said Mayor Conley. "Trees provide a more livable environment for mankind, providing clean air and removing pollutants from the air. Trees provide a cooling effect and prevent global warming. Trees are a source of food for man and animals. Trees constitute hope for our future and carry out our



heritage as they provide for a stable environment.

"Arbor Day is designated for tree planting. The Garden Clubs of Georgia encourage the participation in tree planting. The Blairsville Garden Club recognizes the third Friday in February is designated as 'Arbor Day' in Georgia."

This year marks Shirley Walker's first year as Arbor Day Chairman, adding to her duties as corresponding secretary of the Blairsville Garden Club.

"I want to thank the Lord for a beautiful day," said Walker, who remembered past Arbor Day ceremonies that included snow and frigid temperatures. "It's not cold and it's sunny – not a cloud in the sky. It's been an absolutely beautiful Arbor Day."

Deborah Raleigh has been president of the Blairsville Garden Club for a year now, and she has loved every minute of it.

"It's an historic part of the community, founded 76 years ago," said Raleigh of the club. "I think it's a very important part of Blairsville. We do a lot of things. We don't meet and have coffee – we

work. And the last two years, we've donated \$2,000 a year for college scholarships. So we are an important part of Blairsville."

Also in attendance for the ceremony were Union County Historical Society President Alan Denmon, as well as Tobie Chandler and Yvette Estevez-Hansen of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce.

Other Blairsville Garden Club members present were Pat Smith, Marjorie Reach, Kay Bryant and Lou Ann Bleakley.

Following the ceremony that Friday, and in observance of the intent of the proclamation that all citizens should observe Arbor Day, the GFC handed out dogwoods, loblollies and white pines that were left over from another program.

National Arbor Day is "always celebrated on the last Friday in April, but many states observe Arbor Day on different dates throughout the year based on best tree planting times in their area," according to [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org), and Georgia has designated the third Friday in February as the best planting time.

## Head...from Page 1A

off ramp of the Haralson Development Project underwent a final inspection by the Georgia Department of Transportation earlier this week, but the results of that inspection were not available as of press time.

Mayor Conley said that he and the city had every reason to expect the new ramp to pass the final inspection.

Turn lanes from both 515 East and 515 West have already been created to accommodate traffic flow into the soon-to-open Bob Head Street.

Parking has been a major concern of those behind the Haralson Development Project, as the steady growth of downtown business has necessitated a need for more available parking spaces.

Visitors to the downtown area of late are likely familiar with the expanded parking area behind Blairsville City Hall. This parking will be accessible from the new ramp once it opens, and is currently accessible from Blue Ridge Street from a side road next to city hall.

Mayor Conley said he is very pleased with how Bob Head Street has been coming along.

"I love it – this is going to be very exciting, opening up a new entrance to town," said Mayor Conley.

On Monday, the city refurbished the parking area adjacent to the new ramp with additional gravel and base



Access to the recently completed Haralson Property off ramp, to be called Bob Head Street, is blocked off until March 18

compound to even it up. This was needed mainly to counteract persistent rainy weather during the first quarter of 2016, which had been washing out the parking lot.

And in the March monthly meeting of Mayor Conley and the Blairsville City Council, the council approved a final payoff amount of \$588,288.46 toward a USDA loan taken out by the city for improvements to its wastewater treatment capabilities back in 1997.

The original amount of the loan was \$765,700, taken out on Dec. 18, 1997, to be paid out over 40 years at an interest rate of 4.875 percent.

Interest on the loan last

year was \$28,964.74, with a payment toward the principal in the amount of \$14,595, so paying off the loan 21 years early will save the city a noteworthy amount of money.

"This shows the management of the city, and how we are able to pay off debt without making additional loans," said Mayor Conley. "The interest is tremendous that we'll be saving every year on it."

Also in the meeting, JoAnne Leone introduced the Blairsville Downtown Businesses Association, which is in the process of being created, with a current concentration on parking and signage.

## UGH Relay For Life Team sponsors an indoor community yard sale



Union General Hospital's Relay For Life Team has set their fundraising goal high this year! At a goal of \$10,000,

many different campaigns are scheduled throughout the year. They are excited to announce their upcoming indoor community yard sale this Saturday, March 12th at the Union County Civic Center, 165 Wellborn Street, Blairsville, GA. The sale will last from 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. (rain or shine).

Come out and support your local Relay For Life Team by also finding yourself some

amazing bargains. Offerings include everything from adult name-brand clothes, kid's clothes, toys, home décor, jewelry, tools, books, DVDs, and much more.

Snacks will be available for sale as well as various raffles. One raffle in particular gives you a chance to win a massage gift certificate!

With your support they plan to help create a world with more birthdays!

# 2016 Presidential Preference Primary

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The people of Union County spoke loud and clear in Georgia's Super Tuesday Presidential Preference Primary and a clash between New York real estate mogul Donald Trump and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is undoubtedly the local preference for the November General Election.

On the Republican side Trump dominated Texas Senator Ted Cruz and Florida

Senator Marco Rubio by more than a 2-to-1 margin.

Meanwhile, Clinton prevailed the Democratic ticket, gaining more than 56 percent of the vote. Clinton gained 573 votes (56.34%) to Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders' 138 (41.0%).

However, the Statewide race wasn't as tight with Clinton receiving more than 74 percent to Sanders' 25 percent, as of this writing.

In Union County, Trump received 2691 votes (45.57%) to Cruz's 1412 (23.91%)

and Rubio's 358 (17.56%). Neurosurgeon Ben Carson garnered 414 votes (7.01%) and Ohio Governor John Kasich rounded out the Top five with 270 votes (4.57%).

As of this writing, Trump had the State of Georgia under control with 43 percent of the vote. Cruz was in second at 23 percent and Rubio was on his heels with 21 percent. Carson and Kasich were fourth and fifth with 7 and 5 percent, respectively.

## Unofficial Union County Democratic Election Results

Presidential Preference Primary March 1, 2016 • Votes By Precinct\*

| Candidate                                | Blairsville | Coosa | Choestoe | Jones Creek | Owittown | Ivy Log | Suches | Trackrock | Dooley | Gumlog | Pat Colwell | Absentee and Advance Voting included in Precinct Totals | TOTALS                         | Percentage  |        |
|--|-------------|-------|----------|-------------|----------|---------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|-------------|---|--------------------------------|-------------|--------|
| <b>Democratic Presidential Candidate</b> |             |       |          |             |          |         |        |           |        |        |             |   |                                |             |        |
| Hillary Clinton                          | 70          | 54    | 42       | 63          | 66       | 57      | 9      | 45        | 58     | 36     | 73          | 19  | 209                            | 573         | 56.34% |
| Martin O'Malley                          | 3           | 4     | 1        | 2           | 1        | 3       | 0      | 1         | 0      | 1      | 1           | 0   | 6                              | 17          | 1.67%  |
| Bernie Sanders                           | 55          | 47    | 20       | 53          | 45       | 40      | 20     | 25        | 29     | 40     | 43          | 17  | 121                            | 417         | 41%    |
| Michael Steinberg                        | 0           | 1     | 0        | 0           | 0        | 2       | 1      | 1         | 1      | 2      | 2           | 0   | 10                             | 10          | .98%   |
|  |             |       |          |             |          |         |        |           |        |        |             |   | <b>Total Democratic Voters</b> | <b>1017</b> |        |

## Unofficial Union County Republican Election Results

Presidential Preference Primary March 1, 2016 • Votes By Precinct\*

| Candidate                                | Blairsville | Coosa | Choestoe | Jones Creek | Owittown | Ivy Log | Suches | Trackrock | Dooley | Gumlog | Pat Colwell | Absentee and Advance Voting included in Precinct Totals | TOTALS                         | Percentage  |        |
|--|-------------|-------|----------|-------------|----------|---------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|-------------|---|--------------------------------|-------------|--------|
| <b>Republican Presidential Candidate</b> |             |       |          |             |          |         |        |           |        |        |             |   |                                |             |        |
| Jeb Bush                                 | 3           | 8     | 1        | 4           | 2        | 6       | 0      | 2         | 2      | 6      | 4           | 2   | 23                             | 38          | .64%   |
| Ben Carson                               | 56          | 50    | 32       | 39          | 29       | 39      | 20     | 33        | 33     | 50     | 33          | 6   | 70                             | 414         | 7.01%  |
| Chris Christie                           | 0           | 0     | 0        | 0           | 2        | 2       | 0      | 0         | 0      | 1      | 1           | 0   | 1                              | 6           | .10%   |
| Ted Cruz                                 | 150         | 157   | 121      | 166         | 114      | 142     | 53     | 98        | 114    | 160    | 137         | 27  | 341                            | 1412        | 23.91% |
| Carly Fiorina                            | 0           | 0     | 1        | 0           | 1        | 2       | 1      | 0         | 0      | 1      | 1           | 0   | 1                              | 7           | .12%   |
| Lindsey Graham                           | 1           | 0     | 0        | 0           | 0        | 0       | 0      | 0         | 0      | 0      | 0           | 0   | 0                              | 1           | .02%   |
| Mike Huckabee                            | 1           | 4     | 1        | 1           | 0        | 2       | 2      | 1         | 0      | 2      | 0           | 0   | 3                              | 14          | .24%   |
| John R. Kasich                           | 42          | 28    | 24       | 23          | 21       | 29      | 11     | 17        | 24     | 22     | 29          | 7   | 89                             | 270         | 4.57%  |
| George Pataki                            | 0           | 0     | 0        | 0           | 0        | 0       | 0      | 0         | 0      | 0      | 1           | 0   | 1                              | 1           | .02%   |
| Rand Paul                                | 0           | 3     | 1        | 3           | 2        | 1       | 0      | 0         | 1      | 1      | 0           | 0   | 5                              | 12          | .20%   |
| Marco Rubio                              | 106         | 133   | 76       | 120         | 105      | 90      | 32     | 60        | 69     | 121    | 125         | 21  | 337                            | 1037        | 17.56% |
| Rick Santorum                            | 1           | 0     | 0        | 0           | 0        | 0       | 0      | 0         | 0      | 1      | 0           | 0   | 0                              | 2           | .03%   |
| Donald J. Trump                          | 305         | 327   | 200      | 277         | 232      | 283     | 100    | 172       | 222    | 273    | 300         | 39  | 812                            | 2691        | 45.57% |
|  |             |       |          |             |          |         |        |           |        |        |             |   | <b>Total Republican Voters</b> | <b>5905</b> |        |

# GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR ADVERTISING DOLLAR\$!!

We do not claim to print 2,000, 3,000 or 4,000 copies every month or every 3 months, and place them in Businesses around town to be picked up and discarded.

**Every week** we print and deliver over **10,000 NEWSPAPERS DIRECTLY** to the homes and businesses in Blairsville, Suches and Union County as well as many other local counties.

## IF YOU WANT THE MOST BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

**Contact Joe at the North Georgia News**

# 706-745-6343