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who attend the cookout Open House, the function serves as much more than just a way to raise money for the much needed equipment used to fight fires and save lives.

"It's a fundraiser, but it's also a chance for everybody to come and have a look at the equipment, look at the station, see if there's anything new," said Union County Fire Chief David Dyer, who brought his kids that day. "People drive by this fire station - they know it's a fire station, they see the building up here, but they don't know what's in it and what goes on here."

"So when they come to these open houses, they can kind of check it out, see who's here, see what the firemen do, all that good stuff."

The Saturday event harkened back to the days of yesteryear, when community members would meet at a central location and just enjoy each other's company, and Station 3 firefighters made sure to keep the burgers cooking, the drinks cold and the guests entertained.

Fun wasn't necessarily a requirement for the day, but it was in full supply and nowhere near running out - firefighters and community members mixed seamlessly for a successful community event and firefighter fundraiser.

Children played in an inflatable bounce house and took pictures with a towering 20-foot-tall Smokey the Bear provided by the Georgia Forestry Commission, and all of the trucks and rescue vehicles at Station No. 3 were pulled out and put on display for the public.

The adults especially



Community members that depend on Station 3 enjoy hot dogs and hamburgers and all the fixings on Saturday at Fire Station 3.

enjoyed the raffle, which lasted several hours thanks to the many prizes donated by the various businesses that support the fire station.

Community members who choose to volunteer for the fire department do so for various reasons, though all seem to have an inborn sense of public service that connects them.

"I like being part of something - the fire department is like a brotherhood," said Firefighter Mike Norton, who is also an Advanced EMT, on why he volunteers in his community. "Another part of it, it's something I've wanted to do since I was a kid."

"There was something just like this when I was a kid. We went to an Open House, and they did a bunch of stuff for the kids - they got in the

fire trucks - and I just kind of wanted to be one ever since then."

Added Station 3 Firefighter Warren Cole: "It's definitely a brotherhood, like he said. We're all family here. You've got to be, because you're going into a house that's on fire, and you've got to be able to trust the guy next to you."

Louise Wilson lives just a half mile from Station No. 3, and she visited the Open House with her friends. She said that day she had full confidence that if her house caught fire, it would be quickly put out by the men of Station 3.

"I think it's a wonderful thing for them to be doing," said Wilson, speaking about the Union County volunteer firefighters. Wilson is a strong supporter of the Union Coun-

ty Fire Department, having attended the Station No. 10 Halloween Dance as Catwoman last October.

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and Dinah, his wife, also attended the Open House on Saturday, along with County Manager Larry Garrett and County Clerk Jennifer Queen, both from the commissioner's office.

"This is one of the largest crowds I've ever seen here," said Commissioner Paris. "It's really nice to see the community supporting the fire station, and the fire station supporting the community. These guys do an awesome job, as all of our volunteer stations do, and I appreciate so much all the work they do."

"I'm not sure the public always understands the amount of time and effort these guys and gals put in through training, all to be here and available for protecting our public. So we really appreciate what they do."

Station No. 3 is served by Joe Nickerson, Tim Schroeder, George Holland, Bob Kirby, Ricky Dyer, Ernie Soriero, Cody Matheson, Ken Moss, Mike Norton, Warren Cole and Tye Matheson.

All firefighters of Station No. 3 would like to thank the following sponsors: Shawn's Home Furnishings, General Supply, Grace Mountain Builders, Brass-town Pharmacy, Pappy's Fudge Shop, Union County Park & Rec, Butternut Creek Golf Course, Food City, Food Land, Sears, O'Reilly Auto Parts, AutoZone, Armadillo Grill, Mike's Seafood, Monte Alban, Basket Barn, Berry Twisted, Rose Auto and Pat's Hallmark.

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Black Bear checks out Food City

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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A bear entered Food City last Wednesday and didn't have the last name of Baxter or Osborn.

A young bear cub, likely 60-70 pounds, entered the automatic sliding doors at Food City and made its way through the store, Assistant Blairsville Police Chief Michael "Bear" Baxter said.

"I was off duty, but David Atkins was working and he let me know what was going on," Baxter said.

Bear Baxter and Daren "Bear" Osborn are well known law enforcement officers.

The bear made its way through the various aisles, even pausing in front of the



deli.

It even made its way through the greeting card aisle as if to look for a Father's Day Card.

Baxter said that word has it that the bear came from the McDonald's parking lot

prior to its arrival at Food City.

Eventually, the bear was ushered out the back door of the supermarket, Baxter said.

Last year, two or three young bears were spotted in the trees near the same area.

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