

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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## Two charged with Adams-Donaldson's murder



Brittany Ledford



Rebecca Ann Stokes



The hand-dug well where Diane "Dee Dee" Adams-Donaldson's body was recovered was just underneath the apple sign on the wall of the old Roper Farm House in rural Towns County. The well has been filled in. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

By Charles Duncan  
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Hiawassee - The search for 53-year-old Diane "Dee Dee" Adams-Donaldson has come to an end with tragic

consequences.

Adams-Donaldson, who spent a portion of her youth in Union County, was discovered in an old hand-dug well at the old Roper farm on Turner Turnpike in rural Towns

County.

Forensic experts with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation Crime Laboratory have positively identified her remains using dental records

See *Murder*, 3A

## Former UCHS teacher indicted on sex charges

By Charles Duncan  
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William C. Courson

A Union County Grand Jury has handed up an eight-count indictment against a former Union County paraprofessional on charges that include sexual assault by a person with supervisory, or disciplinary authority and seven counts child pornography or sexual exploitation of children.

According to the indictment, Courson was indicted for enticing a minor child, a student in his charge, to engage in a lewd exhibition of sexually explicit conduct by asking the child to send him "pics" of her of a sexually explicit nature.

Courson also is charged with possession of digital images of the minor child

engaged in sexually explicit acts, the indictment shows.

Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppel said that Courson is no longer employed within the Union County School System.

Steppel declined comment on whether Courson was fired or resigned his teaching

See *Indict*, 2A

## Collins wins Shuck King title

By Charles Duncan  
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Harold Collins has been shucking corn since he was 12 years old.

Two years ago, Collins claimed the title of Shuck King in a format that required shucking as many ears of corn in 1 minute as humanly possible.

Collins shucked an unbelievable 22 ears of corn in 2011.

He took a year off, heading out West with the family to see the sites.

Collins was not available when the call came to defend his title in 2012.

"I took a year off, Brian Mason caught a break, and he won last year," Collins said. "I think Brian shucked 19 ears last year."

"I beat Brian a while back in the watermelon seed spitting contest, but not by much," he said. "If nobody broke that record, I believe it's still a record."

In 2013, the shucking format changed. But, 38 years of shuck experience is hard to rival.



Harold Collins raises his arms in victory as the Fastest Five Shuck King at the Fourth Sweetest Corn Festival at the Market. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

The new format called for shucking five ears in the fastest time. Collins claimed another title. It felt good, but, it also felt empty. Mason didn't defend his title in 2013, leaving Collins to wonder about the title.

"This is the kind of fun we're having out here at the Farmers Market," Collins said. "The great part about it, we know there will be a

Sweetest Corn Festival in 2014.

"It's something to look forward to, people just keep coming here and we all just keep having a good time," Collins said.

Mason and Collins will lock horns again for the title of Shuck King.

See *Shucks*, 6A

## Rain can't stop Suches Fireworks

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Suches - Best things come to those who wait and that was the case in Suches on Saturday.

It may have been a few days late, but it definitely wasn't a dollar short, as those who made the drive to Suches on Saturday got their money's worth and then some.

Especially those from Blairsville that didn't make the Fireworks Show in Hiawassee, this was their first opportunity to witness Fourth of July fireworks in Union County.

Below every nose and above every chin you could always find a smile, as the general consensus is that Suches knows a thing or two about celebrating America's Birthday.

See *Suches*, 2A



The belated Fourth of July fireworks in Suches went off without a hitch on Saturday. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

## City awarded \$1.7 million for infrastructure

By Charles Duncan  
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The Georgia Environmental Finance Authority has awarded a \$1,693,000 Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan to the city of Blairsville, Mayor Jim Conley announced this week.

The money will be used to pay for a water system improvement project that includes upgrading undersized and aging waterlines along Pat Haralson Memorial Drive and Deep South Farm Road for improved flow and pressure and reduced water leaks.

The city also plans to replace its existing water meters with a wireless automatic smart reading system for its 1,310 customers, which will improve meter reading efficiency, reduce labor costs, and provide a more accurate measurement of water usage throughout the system.

The project involves replacement of aging 2-inch PVC water lines with modern 6-inch lines that withstand the need for water pressure.

Simultaneously, it also entails upgrading water meters with uber modern Automated Meter Reading technology, Mayor Conley said.

Chip McGaughey, an engineer for EMI, presented the two projects to the City Council in December.

The largest part of the



Mayor Jim Conley

project will be water system improvements from Pat Haralson Drive to Deep South Farm Road, which entails larger water lines going under Pat Haralson Drive and to the end of Deep South Farm Road, Mayor Conley said.

"The truth is, we don't know exactly how old those water lines really are out Haralson Drive and Deep South Farm Road," the Mayor said. "We've got the hospital out there and if there's a break on Haralson or Deep South roads, we're in a bind and they're lacking water pressure. It's a must do project."

The Meter Replacement Project will upgrade meters for City customers to AMR meters, Automated Meter Reading, Mayor Conley said.

The new meter reading system would be more cost effective, save on human error and be more efficient than

the outdated meters resulting in a possible gain in revenue, he said.

The projects will be done in unison, and the City will save on support costs, Mayor Conley said.

Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal, House District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison and District 51 State Sen. Steve Gooch were instrumental in pushing for the GEFA loan, said GEFA Executive Director Kevin Clark.

"I'd like to express appreciation to Gov. Deal, State Sen. Steve Gooch, and State Rep. Stephen Allison for their support," Clark said. "The state's commitment to helping cities and counties finance infrastructure projects contributes greatly to improving Georgia's water resources."

The current interest rate is 1.50 percent, but the City gets a 1 percent reduction because it is combining the Meter Change Out program with the water improvement project, Clark said.

"Blairsville will pay .50 percent interest on the 20-year loan, which includes principal forgiveness of up to \$423,250 if all loan funds are drawn. The loan qualifies for a 1 percent interest rate reduction because it is a water conservation project," Clark said.

The total project cost is \$1,693,000 with GEFA providing the entire amount, Clark said.

## More parking slated for Farmers Market

By Charles Duncan  
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Union County's highly successful Farmers Market has expanded by 5-plus acres, Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said on Saturday.

Commissioner Paris said that the county, using Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax dollars, recently closed on the property along Butternut Creek.

Plans to expand the Market's parking is expected to begin in earnest this week. The county will build a bridge to connect the current Farmers Market property and the new acreage, Paris said.

He added that in the future, the property will allow for expansion of the Farmers Market facilities.



Expansion of parking accommodations at the Union County Farmers Market will begin in earnest this week. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

"We'll start on connecting the two parcels this week," Paris said. "We should have an additional 400 parking spots as well as more

room for events." It was evident that progress beside the Market has

See *Expand*, 6A

## 15th Annual Butternut Creek Festival on tap Saturday and Sunday at Meeks

NGN Special

Come join the High Country Artisans as they present the 15th Annual Butternut Creek Festival this weekend, Saturday and Sunday, July 20th and 21st, from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.

More than 70 of the Southeast's finest artisans and crafters, demonstrators, non-profits organizations, food vendors, and musicians will join this local art organization as they take advantage of the serene environment of Meeks Park as they line the shores of the Butternut Creek.

There is something for everyone at the yearly venue.

This year's demonstrations include Mal McEwen's

See *Butternut*, 3A



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**Student Registration**  
9am-3pm  
July 17 and 24,  
then daily until  
school starts  
August 6th

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**FARMERS MARKET**  
Home Grown & Handmade  
Customer Appreciation Day!  
FREE Tomato Sandwiches!!  
Saturday, July 20th  
Union County Farmer's Market

See page 8A

**Fire Station #1**  
507 Shoe  
Factory Road  
Tuesday, July 23

**GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION**

See page 8A

**GREEN BEAN Festival**  
Friday, July 26th & Saturday, July 27th

Have you Bean to Blairsville?

**Roads Closing for 5K Race**

See page 8A