

Dr. Gowder...from Page 1A

has become today's state-of-the-art Union General Hospital. It has been exciting for me to be a part of the expansion of our medical community and to witness the amazing growth of our area as well."

And to find out why Dr. Gowder chose Union County of all places to bring his medical expertise in the first place, one need only walk outside.

"I was struck by the beauty of the mountains, but even more so by the friendliness of the people," said Dr. Gowder.

Much has changed since the "humble beginning" of Dr. Gowder's clinic, and the community has much to be thankful for in the way of medical advancements from those early days.

"It has gone from an outpatient clinic with two doctors' offices and two exam rooms to the beautiful facility here today, as well as an excellent nursing home, a dialysis center, and a fitness center," said Dr. Gowder.

As the good doctor continues his legacy of forward

medical thinking through his children, he is clear on his fondest memories of Union County.

"Being able to retire and turn my practice over to my son David, seeing my son Mike become administrator of Union General, and starting Appalachian Home Health Care with my wife and four daughters," said Dr. Gowder.

Dr. Gowder is a board member of the Mountain Community Healthcare Foundation, which is a not-for-profit organization aimed at increas-

ing the quality of healthcare at both Union General Hospital and Chatuge Regional Hospital in Hiawassee.

"The Foundation is very happy to be able to honor Dr. George Gowder and his numerous contributions to our community in this special way," said Foundation Director Leslie Daniel. "Dr. Gowder had a lasting impact on the health and well-being of our community. We are grateful for the vision he had and for the love and care he graciously gave the people in

this community." The chapel is located on the second floor of Union

General Hospital at the exit of the elevator. Light refreshments will be served.

Panthers...from Page 1A

Earlier this year, the surviving members of the 1957 football team went on a fundraising mission, to allow them to purchase the granite monument with all the names of the first football team, its Principal, coaches and managers, and charter Quarterback Club members, as well as the life-size bronze Panther.



1957 Panther Herbert Dyer poses with Coach Dave Hardin at the bronze Panther Monument outside the Panthers' Fieldhouse.

Hardin was the team's first head coach, while Martin and Rogers were charter members of the Quarterback Club that brought high school football to Union County.

"Jim McAfee came up with the idea," said Jim Conley, a 1957 Panther and now Mayor of Blairsville. "We wanted to remember that team, not to memorialize, but to remember those who have already passed on, and to those who will pull on that Panther uniform in the future."

Coach Hardin and 1957 team members and families met at Steve's Steakhouse for a Reunion gathering and meal prior to the unveiling ceremonies at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium.

"It's always great to get back together and remember that first season," Conley said.

How good of a coach was Coach Hardin?

"He came up here and took over a bunch of boys that didn't know anything about football. Some of us had never seen a football. The ones that had didn't know very much about it. He was good enough to pull a bunch of young boys together that had barely seen a football and get 5 wins out of them with only 2 losses," said 1957 Panther Jim McAfee. "He was a heck of a coach, teacher and tutor. He has been ever since."

"We have fonder memories of Coach Hardin now, as he and we get older," Conley said. "He's more like family now than just our coach."

How difficult was raising money to purchase the granite monument and bronze Panther?

"It was a team effort for everyone that played on that 1957 football team," Conley said. "However, in the end, it was a community effort in raising the money to purchase those tributes."

The Panthers first game in 2014 ended with a score of Union 57, Towns 14. The most points ever scored in a single game in Panther history.

"Wow, 57 points in the first game," Conley said, referring to a tribute from the present day Panthers to the 1957 team. "We couldn't have

asked for any better."

The bronze Panther is located in front of the Panthers' Fieldhouse, and the granite monument is located at the entrance to Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium.

The 1957 Football Project members wish to thank the Union County Schools administration, UCHS coaches, the Quarterback Club and the community for supporting the additions to the UCHS Athletics legacy.

Fest...from Page 1A

cy. Barbeque sandwiches, hamburgers, hot dogs, and boiled peanuts will be available.

For those with a sweet tooth, funnel cakes, boiled peanuts, cotton candy, fried apple pies, and homemade preserves are available, but they sell fast so make sure to pick some up as early as possible.

As for the Run Above the Clouds, its elevation ranges from 2,800 feet above sea level at the start-finish line. It dips to 2,600 and rises to elevations approaching 3,100 feet. The race is Georgia's highest-altitude 10K, featuring "The Cooper Gap Climb," a 230-foot elevation change over a one-mile stretch. The Run Above the Clouds benefits the students of Woody Gap School. Every year The

Run Above the Clouds awards scholarships to graduating seniors and to postgraduates of Woody Gap to encourage them to continue their education. All 10K participants are guaranteed a t-shirt.

The run starts and finishes at the Suches Community Center, across the street from Woody Gap School on Ga. 60. It then passes Woody Lake on Ga. 60, then turns onto Cooper Gap Road at about the 3/4-mile mark. The turnaround is in the small community of Mt. Airy.

Water stations are provided at three points on the 10K course. Bears have also been known to come out and watch the race at various locations along the course.

Age groups are 19 and under, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49,

50-59, 60-69, and 70 and over. Awards are given to the first and second place finishers, for male and female in each group, and top male and female overall.

Both races start and finish at the Suches Community Center. The 1K Fun Run takes off at 9 a.m. and the 10K at 9:10 a.m.

For more details regarding the race and festival you can visit www.suches.com. Regarding the race you may email cloudrun10k@yahoo.com or visit www.runabovetheclouds.org.

You can also register for the race at www.active.com

Admission for the festival is \$4 for adults, \$3 for students, 6-and-under is free, as is the parking. All proceeds remain at Woody Gap Schools.

Stump...from Page 1A

orders and regulatory mandates, he's running our country. We have fewer people working today than during Jimmy Carter's administration. Gas prices, milk prices, food prices are all going through the roof right now because of this failed administration's policies."

Rep. Collins painted a similar picture.

"We don't need a re-hash of the 1980s," Rep. Collins said. "This election matters."

Rep. Collins cited the White House's failed foreign policy as the reason for trou-



U.S. Rep. Doug Collins

bles abroad.

"Now, today, we're having to go back into a country (Iraq) that three years ago, he (President Obama) proclaimed we'd never have to go back," Rep. Collins said. "We were supposed to leave troops there, but he (President Obama) took them out."

"That's what we're dealing with folks, an administration that continues to lead us in the wrong direction," he said.

Rep. Collins faces Democrat David Vogel in the November General Election.

DDA meeting update

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Blairsville's Downtown Development Authority held a called meeting Thursday to discuss the closing of a Georgia Department of Community Affairs loan to Van Wadle, Inc.

The DDA Board gave Chairman Paul Thompson authority to sign for the loan on behalf of the DDA at closing, which took place Friday.

The loan in question is the Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund, or DDRLF, and is meant "to assist cities, counties and development authorities in their efforts to revitalize and enhance downtown areas by providing below-market rate financing to fund capital projects in core historic downtown areas and adjacent historic neighborhoods where DDRLF will spur commercial redevelopment," according to the Georgia DCA website.

Earlier in the year, Chris Van Wadle of Van Wadle, Inc., who owns the old King's 5 & 10 building, approached the DDA Board and Blairsville City Council with the intention of applying for these funds in order to offset the cost of improvements to the building. Van Wadle,

Inc. required the blessing of both the Board and City Council to acquire these funds.

"The DCA offers low interest loans, they take second position behind the regular banks," said DDA Program Manager Darren Harper at a previous meeting. "It's a way of helping him achieve the project at a very low cost."

The DDA is acting as a conduit to deliver DCA funds to Van Wadle, Inc., which will be repaying the loan directly to the DCA without having to go back through the DDA.

This will be a boon to the downtown area, as the historic King's building gets restored, which will benefit downtown Blairsville, yet the DDA does not have to fund the project or take on any fiscal responsibility.

The Georgia DCA awarded Van Wadle a \$169,718, 15-year term loan at 2 percent interest.

Chairman Thompson and DDA attorney Cary Cox met Friday with Van Wadle and his legal representative, Larry Sorgen, to sign the paperwork necessary to get the funds moving from the DCA, through the DDA and to Van Wadle, Inc.

The board also touched on

the Haralson Development Project. Designing the roadway that will extend from Ga. 515 across the land behind City Hall is now the priority of the project, as final plans for the exit ramp will determine how much wetland area will be impacted.

Once the board determines how much of the wetlands will be impacted, it can then deal with mitigation of those wetlands. Mitigation credits act as a way to offset damage done to land and streams during construction.

And the board has the letter of intent from the Alaculsky Mitigation Bank near Rome, which will hold \$28,000 worth of stream mitigation credits.

"We've dealt with the stream mitigation, we know the cost on the stream mitigation," said Chairman Thompson. "The two unknowns we don't know are wetlands and stream buffer variance."

Currently, the board seeks to have what it refers to as a road drainage structure classified as such by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. The board hopes to get a stream buffer variance for the stream crossing where the drainage structure is located, and that road construction can then begin.