



UNION COUNTY COMMUNICATOR

Keeping Union County Citizens Informed

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Commissioner Paris To Become President of ACCG

On April 27, 2010, at the ACCG (Association County Commissioners of Georgia) Annual Conference in Savannah, GA, Commissioner Paris will become president of ACCG and will hold that position for one year.

How do you become President? First you must be appointed/elected to the Board of Managers of the Association. Then you have to be elected to 3rd VP, after proving your leadership abilities through years of service to ACCG. You then move up to 2nd, 1st, and then, President.

What exactly is ACCG?

The Association County Commissioners of Georgia is a non-profit, instrumentality of Georgia's county governments. Formed in 1914 with 19 charter county members, today ACCG serves as the consensus building, training, and legislative organization for all 159 county governments in the state.

ACCG works to ensure that the counties can provide the necessary leadership, services and programs to meet the health, safety and welfare needs of their citizens.

Who can be a member of ACCG?

Georgia's county governments constitute the direct membership of ACCG. This encompasses 159 counties represented by more than 810 county commissioners. The association's constituency also includes 400 appointed county clerks, managers, administrators, and attorneys and more than 30,000 full-time and part-time employees. Non-governmental entities, including private businesses and corporations, may also participate in many of ACCG's activities as Associate Members.

What services does ACCG offer to counties?

ACCG administers a comprehensive array of member ser-

VICES, tailored to meet the needs of county governments. These include insurance, financing, managerial, technical assistance programs, and training.

ACCG hosts a number of meetings and training opportunities throughout the year, culminating in the Annual Meeting in the spring which is the largest gathering of county officials in the state.

ACCG Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Association County Commissioners of Georgia to enhance the role, stature and responsiveness of county government in Georgia. Since counties are the level of government closest to the people and serve all the people of the state, ACCG will promote the ability of Georgia counties to provide public services responsibly, efficiently, and cost effectively through cooperative legislative action, education of public officials, provision of quality member services and technical assistance, and increasing public awareness of critical local government issues.

Commissioner's Corner

Some have asked me what my being President of a statewide Association means for Union County. Other than increasing my workload tremendously, it means improved access to the correct people and state organizations. It means having influence in drafting legislation that will help Union County as well as all other counties. It means having a new network of friends you can call on for assistance in supporting our county. Ultimately, it could mean having the extra edge in securing funding and grants for infrastructure improvements. Through this position, I will also visit many counties and every district in the state to look at how they operate and always looking for new and improved ideas. I will be directly involved with our lobbying team at the State Legislature, help coordinate discussions for the operational decisions of the entire organization, help manage decisions for our two annual conferences, and work with our Executive Director and his staff very closely to always search for new ideas to improve county government. Just to name a few! It will be a very exciting, but extremely busy year. However, my first priority will always be Union County, you, the employees and our taxpayers.

Union County Featured in Georgia Trend Magazine



Union County was featured in the February issue of the Georgia Trend magazine in an article titled “Ready for Rebound, Planning for Better Times”, by Randy Southerland. The article talks about the growth of the county in the last ten years that created a construction and real estate industry that was a major employer. Now many of those people are out of work because lots and houses are not selling at the same rate as in the past. People can’t buy second or even first homes because they cannot sell their homes or they have lost their jobs.

However, despite the bad economy, Union County is trying to “position itself to emerge from the economic downturn in good shape to start growing again.” Union County is using money from SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) to fund road projects in an effort to put as many idled workers back on the job as possible. Over the last eight months, about \$1 million has gone into construction efforts that have kept machinery and workers going.

According to Mitch Griggs, executive director of the Union County Development Authority, there are beginning to be some first hints of a recovery and the county wants to be ready as a place that is business friendly.

To read the entire article you can go to www.georgiatrend.com.

Snow and Ice in Union County



(The following was written at the height of the snow and ice season and shows what a problem we had this winter.)

The Union County Road Dept. was kept busy the past several weeks battling the snow and ice. We received an allotment of 100 tons of salt prior to the winter, which is the way you have to order it. We actually have received about 80 tons and have used about 90% of that amount. All distributors and the State has been nearly out of salt and we have been trying for a week to obtain the remaining amount of our allotment, but there is none. We have about one days supply remaining and if the large snow this past weekend had materialized, everyone would have been in trouble. The large snowfalls in the northeast have drained all supplies for Georgia. We anticipate by the time the paper publishes that we will have received the final 20 tons.

We have also asked for an additional 20 tons, but will be on a waiting list. Should we have another large snow or ice event prior to resupply, we would have to prioritize which roads were salted. We do not anticipate that being a problem however.

This last week we salted, scraped and graveled 158 different county roads which covered a distance of 271.3 miles. (Equivalent distance from Blairsville nearly to Albany, Ga) We have six trucks with salt beds and scrape blades. I feel totally confident that I do not think another county has been able to do more than our Road Dept has done. While it is easy to take them for granted, they do an excellent job in tough situations. We have received many compliments and they certainly appreciate that. Just this past week we had 260 hours of overtime. The Georgia Dept of Transportation also asked us to help them this past week as they had a truck break down and we scraped several miles of State Highway for them.

I think I can safely say that everyone has seen about all the bad weather we want this season and it is not over yet.



Congratulations!

Commissioner Paris Receives Award

The Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition's Water Quality Stewardship Award recognizes outstanding contributions to its mission of facilitating water quality improvements in the upper Hiwassee River basin. Union County Commissioner



Lamar Paris has been named the recipient of the second annual award which was presented March 12 at Brasstown Valley Resort. "Commissioner Paris sets a good example for other local government officials in our four-county area," said Callie Moore, executive director of HRWC. "We see very few severe violations of water quality in Union County compared to the other counties in the watershed." Congratulations Lamar!



E911 Receives Award

Recently E911 received an award for outstanding service and commitment to the citizens of Union County from M.A.D.D. (Mothers Against Drunk Driving.) Milly Baxter and Becky Walker received the award for E911 at the M.A.D.D.

appreciation dinner.

E911 Staff Receive Thank You Letter From Citizen

There are so many medical professionals in our community who make sacrifices every day without the proper appreciation. When they saved my life last week, the words "Thank you" just did not seem adequate to express mine and my family's gratitude. Last Monday, March 8th, about 4am, the EMTs and the 911 service for the Union County Fire Department Station 3, and Medics from the Med Unit #5 prevented me from having a fatal heart attack. I called 911 and hung up because my husband wanted to drive me to the hospital. But Amy Smith, the 911 Operator, called me back and when I told her that I had taken two nitroglycerin pills and was still having chest pains, she said that she was sending someone to help me. And I now know that if she had not, I would probably not be here. She writes that she had a 90% blockage in the main artery leading from her heart. At the time, each of these professionals was just doing their jobs. But to me this was much, much more. And simple words of "Thank you" do not begin to express the gratitude I feel for each and every one of you for the step you played in saving my life. For, if one of you had dropped the ball, I would not be here. Sandy Eady
Thanks to all Emergency Personnel who do such a great job every day.

Community Center Opens in Suches

This community center was made possible because the citizens of the county voted for the S.P.L.O.S.T., proposed by Commissioner Paris, which financed it along with several other capital



projects throughout the county, including the purchase of five new pumper/tankers for the county volunteer fire departments, one of which is across the parking lot in the Suches station.

An advisory committee consisting of David

Barton, Margo Crooks, Bernie Fontaine, Annette Gooch, Joel Gooch, Jim Miner and Lucie Scales provided community input assisted by Jerry Wood of the County Rec Board and Larry Garrett from the Commissioners office. Randy Day from building inspection made sure everything went according to code. Johnny Holbrooks from the county was instrumental in handling many jobs as well as scheduling the detainee work crew.

The building itself incorporates many of the structural and other elements of the old Woody Gap School gym. Also present are basketball goals, scoreboard and reconstructed bleachers from the old gym (which use much of the original lumber). The front part of the building is all new and contains rest rooms, two meeting rooms and a large kitchen furnished with major appliances donated by the fire department and other equipment donated by community residents. The tables and chairs here are on permanent loan from the fire department as well. Much of the work was done by Suches residents, some by contractors from the area and a great finishing effort was made by detainees from the center in Blairsville. All deserve the thanks of the community.

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Farmer's Market to Open in New Location



Work has begun on the new Farmer's Market and if the weather cooperates we should be at the new location on Old Smokey Road by opening day of June 26th. We also plan to be open on Wednesdays.

The hours of the market will be 7 am to 1 pm. Check out our website for the latest information.

www.ucfarmersmarket.com

Public Hearings

May 6—5pm Amendments to the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance.

May 6-5:30 pm Amendments to the Subdivision Ordinance

CENSUS RESPONSE RATE FOR UNION COUNTY

As of April 22, the census response rate for Union County was 67% as compared to 55% in 2000. Georgia's response rate is 69% and 71% for the nation.

Way to go Union County! You still have time to turn in a Census form. If you have not received one you can pick up a form at the Commissioner's Office.

**UNION COUNTY
COMMISSIONER'S
OFFICE**

114 Courthouse Street, Box 1
Blairsville, GA 30512

Phone: 706-439-6000

Fax: 706-439-6004

E-mail:

unioncounty@uniongov.com

unioncountyga.gov

Great American Clean-Up

The annual Great American Clean-up will be held on Saturday, May 8th on the Blairsville Square beginning at 9 a.m.

We will be planting flowers and picking up trash to beautify the downtown area.

Bring your gloves and tools and come help us!



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Some work remains to be done. The basketball court will be painted in the gym and all floors will be finished in some manner. Other furnishings and furniture need to be brought in. The facility is, however, ready to use and functions have already been held, some ongoing uses are underway and others are under consideration. The center will be open for these uses as interest is generated and volunteer help becomes available. If you are interested in using the facility and/or are willing to volunteer some time,

Suches Fire Station Expands



When the road department recently moved out of two open bays at the end of Station 5 to an improved facility across the parking lot, the space was turned over to the fire department. Using department funds generated by the annual fund raising letter drive the two bays were enclosed to provide better space for the vehicles at the station some of which had been "sandwiched" between the doors. With this expansion there are no longer any "first-out" vehicles which do not have immediate access to exit from the building which should provide faster response times and reduce the possibility of damage to building and equipment

SPLOST Project Report

A lot of progress has been made on various SPLOST projects.

- * The Pat Haralson Civic Center renovation has been completed.
- * Work is currently in progress on the cover for the Horse Arena
- * Grading has been done at the Farmer's Market facility and they are getting the pads ready for the buildings.
- * Construction is underway at the Byron Herbert Reece site
- * The new trail at Meeks Park should be finished next month.
- * The old clubhouse at Butternut Creek Golf course is coming down to make way for the new Multi-Use Community Center.
- * Groundbreaking for the Library Expansion will take place next month.

We are very excited about all of these changes and pleased that we can put some local people to work on various projects.



SCRAP TIRE ROUND-UP

Got old tires lying around? Or tires you have picked up during a clean up? Bring them to the transfer station on Friday, May 7 and Saturday, May 8 during transfer station hours.

NO TIRES ON RIMS

NO OVERSIZE TIRES

ABSOLUTELY NO COMMERCIAL DEALERS!

MUST SHOW PROOF OF UNION COUNTY RESIDENCY

Sponsored by the Union County Commissioner's Office
Part of the Union County Great American Clean-up Campaign

Check out our new website at www.unioncountyga.gov.