

Tractor Supply...from Page 1A



The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce and local stakeholders held a ribbon cutting for the new Tractor Supply store on Saturday, Oct. 3. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

excited that they built this store here in Blairsville, it's very convenient for me," Elizabeth Saunders of Hiawassee said. "I own horses and chickens, so I'm interested in all the products they sell.

"This (store opening) is very exciting because there's just not a lot of options around here, and this place has everything that I need."

One feature unique to the Blairsville location is the pet washing station. For \$9.99, Tractor Supply will bathe your pet on-site. While the station is not limited to K-9s, the equipment was constructed with dogs in mind, Jones said.

"Customers have already taken to it," he said. "On our second day we did 12 pets. It's a one-stop shop, and we supply different types of shampoos, dips, a full grooming station, and it comes with a super-powered blower or a towel dry.

"We're the only one in

the area that offers this. Blue Ridge doesn't have one, Blue Ridge doesn't have one, and I believe Rome is the closest location that does."

Store manager Adam Christian couldn't be happier with the response he's received from the locals. And while COVID-19 has limited community outreach and special events, Tractor Supply is hoping to build strong relationships with non-profits in the tri-state area.

"Everyone I've met has been extremely friendly and excited," he said. "Lots of different programs in the area, like the FFA and Humane Society, have been awesome, and we're looking to get involved with them.

"We're holding off on hosting any big events because of COVID, but we hope to hit the Farmers Market and host some pet adoptions and tractor shows to bring some fun to the community."

Also Saturday, Atlanta's New Country 101.FIVE attended to kick off the grand opening celebration, bringing Dallas McCade from the weekday morning show "Kincaid and Dallas" to hand out shirts and hats while greeting customers at the station tent from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Jones and the Tractor Supply management team want the community to learn the store's correct location, as the directions provided on Google Maps are inaccurate and have been leading customers into Downtown Blairsville.

The store is located just east of Blairsville off Georgia 515, just past Wendy's, but before Sears and the Aviator Café. Tractor Supply is on the right, just below the Union County High School front office.

Visitors may also reach the store via Panther Circle, but caution is advised during school pickup and drop-off hours.

Craft Fair...from Page 1A



The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds is as picturesque as ever, and will host the Fall Craft Show this weekend, followed by the Appalachian Brew, Stew & Que Festival Oct. 24.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

able to participate in another craft show in a long time since many have been canceled for COVID.

Ochello creates wood and leather burning art as well as special engravings and paintings, which can be found at CoonNeck.com.

"Everything is handmade in here," Ochello said of his booth. "I build and paint the frames and do all the wood-burning and carving. Everything is all done by me and by hand. I have been doing this for about 15 years, and I travel all around the United States to sell my stuff.

"I actually heard about this from a vendor at another show. I asked about it and here I am. I do the Wooden Bridge Festival up in Indiana, and there are like a million people there.

"Considering the rain, this turnout has been good. My last show was in March, and this is the first one I've had.

All the ones that canceled have been pushed back."

Other vendors were just as passionate about being at the fairgrounds, with mother/daughter combo Sherry and Devenna Kelly attending to sell their handmade soaps.

"We do this for fun," Sherry said. "We like to do themes every year, and last year we did Harry Potter. This year we decided to do soaps based on 'Stranger Things' characters."

The Kellys plan to be at the show for the Oct. 16 weekend, and both said they were looking forward to a lively venue.

Rainy weather did not deter attendees from making the most of the festival this past weekend, with attendees like Emily Deacon of North Carolina simply being happy to attend an event for the first time in months.

"This is great and gives people something to do,"

Deacon said. "We heard about it from a friend and decided to drive down here to check it out for the weekend.

"Unfortunately, the rain put a damper on things, but it is still great. We haven't explored this area much, but we did get some goodies while we were here.

"It is nice to see a variety of vendors who are all offering their unique things. I bet they are loving being out and doing festivals. I hope that festivals will make a return completely by next year.

"We usually love going to them in the fall and winter, but this whole COVID thing changed those plans. This is great, though, and I'm happy we came."

Following the Craft Show will be the Appalachian Brew, Stew & Que Festival on Oct.24. For more information on upcoming events, check out GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com.

Heating Assistance...from Page 1A

ranges); however, we do have a max amount for the December one, so that \$25,025 will be the max amount for a one-person household, which means that they would end up qualifying for the \$350 if they are close to the \$25,000 line."

This program has been helping people in the community for more than a decade, with allotments steadily increasing over the years, according to NDO Community Resource Coordinator Ann Sullivan.

In this area, she said, upwards of 500 people or more from each Union and Towns County take advantage of the program every year. Both counties usually get the same monetary allotment, though there are always funds left over.

The program lasts through March and is followed by the start of the cooling assistance program that offers similar energy assistance. For more information, visit <https://www.ndo.org/web/heating.html>.

Appointment scheduling for the application process will



begin Nov. 2 for 65 and older or medically homebound residents, and on Dec. 1 for everyone else, with the automated number of 855-636-3108 opening at 12:01 a.m. on Nov. 2.

Ninth District Opportunity offers other programs for households in need that can be applied for at any time.

"Our energy assistance program is the one that we are most known for, but we also have housing programs," McCoy said. "We can help people financially get into housing as long as they are income eligible.

"We can also help

people that have court-ordered evictions. We can help them to where we can possibly catch them up and get it to where they are not in that eviction anymore.

"We also get two other grant funding (opportunities) each year, and with those two, based on different guidelines, we can help with electricity and sometimes rent and things like that."

For more information on these programs, contact Blairsville Ninth District Opportunity at 706-745-6596 or Towns County Ninth District at 706-896-4783.