

United Way's help detailed at lunch

The \$1.8 million annual fundraising campaign kicks off Tuesday before community leaders.

By Sarah A. Reid
staff writer

When a fire destroyed Patty Pittman's home Jan. 2, 2001, the last thing on her mind was the United Way of Cumberland County.

But she saw her 33 years worth of donations at work when the Red Cross gave her and a roommate clothing and food vouchers.

"They shared with us the United Way contributions you all had made," she told 250 community leaders Tuesday at Snyder Memorial Baptist Church.

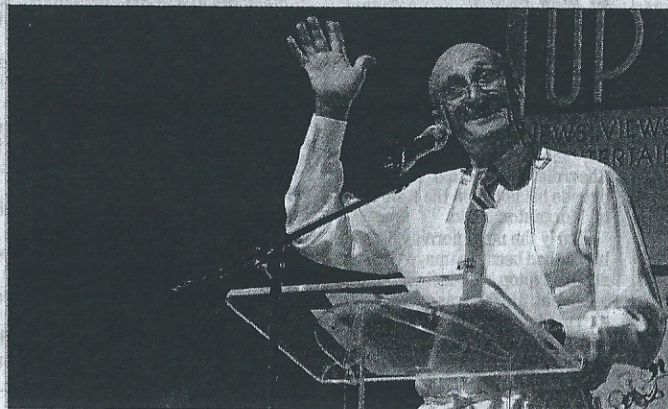
Pittman and other speakers urged local residents to do their part and help the United Way

reach the \$1.8 million goal it has set for this year's annual campaign.

"Which is pretty aggressive with the economy and the state it is in now," said Robert Hines, the president and chief executive officer of the agency. "We hope people will step up to the plate."

The campaign started with Tuesday's luncheon and will end the first week of November, when all the money is collected, Hines said.

As part of Live United, the name given to the 2008 campaign, the United Way of Cumberland County is focusing on three needs outlined by the national organization: education,



George Quigley tells a story about volunteering Tuesday during the United Way of Cumberland County campaign kickoff at Snyder Memorial Baptist Church.

Staff photo
by Marcus Castro

financial stability and health insurance.

The \$1.8 million goal has not changed since 2005, but the need in the community has,

those who work with the United Way say.

About 3,600 children are enrolled in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, one of the

fastest growing of the 80 programs the United Way supports, Hines said. The library sends a book a month to preschoolers enrolled in the program.

The Imagination Library program has highlighted another need — adult literacy programs — which grow each year at Fayetteville Urban Ministries, Hines said.

Two years ago, 60 percent of Girl Scouts couldn't afford their annual dues, Hines said. The United Way made up that shortfall. Hines said he wouldn't be surprised if that number increases as families struggle with increased food and gas prices.

But how much the United Way will be able to give depends on how much money is raised.

"It's a discretionary thing," said Stuart Walters, the campaign chairman.

Staff writer Sarah A. Reid can be reached at reids@fayobserver.com or 323-4848, ext. 280.