

# The Badge

January 2023  
Issue Five



## Towns County Sheriff's Office News



### From the desk of Sheriff Ken Henderson:

As 2023 begins, I am inspired by the hard work and dedication of our employees and feel quite proud to see us out in the community, and within our organization, taking pride in what we do and taking care of the citizens we protect.

I would also like to let everyone know how extremely proud I am of the quick action of our Investigators and Deputies on the dangerous felony traffic stop in Young Harris, which you can read about in this issue.

We continue to remain committed to the citizens of Towns County, and to our continued efforts to suppress the dangerous drugs being brought into our community.



**Towns County Sheriff's Office would like to thank all the individuals and businesses who donated to our Shop with the Sheriff event to make it such a success.**

## SHERIFF'S LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY

Towns County Sheriff's Office is now accepting applications for the 2023-01 Sheriff's Law Enforcement Academy. Space is limited and attendance is free.

Participants must be at least 21 years old, a resident, business owner or employee, or student within Towns County. Participants must be willing to make a commitment to attend the full 10-week program which will be weekly. Class dates will be determined early 2023.

From road patrols to court services, to jail operations, participants gain a better understanding of daily operations through presentations by various members of Towns County Sheriff's Office, as well as guest speakers from other partnership agencies.

If interested, you can apply in person at the Towns County Sheriff's Office located at: 4070 Highway 339, Young Harris, Georgia 30582, Monday-Friday between the hours of 8:30am and 4:30 pm. Applications are also available on our website: <https://www.townscountysheriff.org/sca> . If you have questions, please contact Jill Gittens at 706-896-4444.

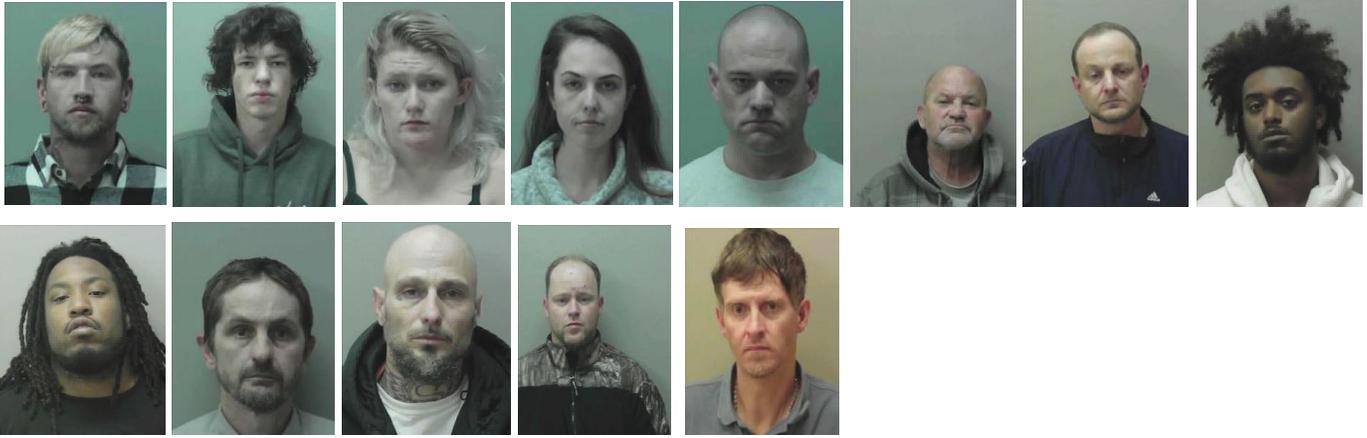


On December 18th, a Towns County High School student left his vehicle in the school parking lot to play in a basketball tournament. When he returned to the school, he found his vehicle had been stolen.

The stolen vehicle was located at the Dairy Queen in Hiawassee, with a laptop and keys missing. Sheriff's Investigators opened an investigation and an individual, John Walker Bryant, age 17, was located at the Budget Inn in Hiawassee. Bryant was arrested and charged with Felony Theft by Taking. The laptop and keys were recovered.

Sheriff Ken Henderson thanks his officers for the quick work, arrest, and recovery of the vehicle and stolen property.

## DECEMBER DRUG ARRESTS:



*All persons are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.*

## SAFETY ROAD CHECK RESULTS IN DISCOVERY OF METHAMPHETAMINE AND STOLEN STREET SIGNS

Towns County Sheriff's Office conducted a Highway Safety Check on Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, on Gumlog Road at Many Forks Church in Young Harris. Safety checks are a proactive approach to keep our roads and community safe. As a result, K-9 Dakota alerted on a vehicle which was searched. Methamphetamine was confiscated and a passenger was arrested.

As a result of the arrest, Sheriff's Investigators and K-9 conducted a search of a residence finding an amount of Methamphetamine which was confiscated, and field tested. The results of the field test revealed Methamphetamine laced with Fentanyl. Several stolen county road signs from Towns County and Clay County were also recovered. The following individuals were arrested and charged as follows:

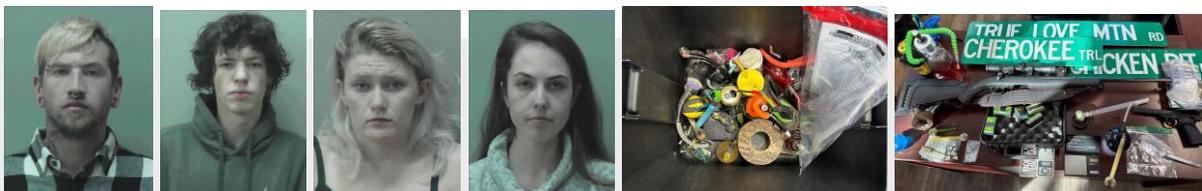
Richard Robert Angelo, age 29, Young Harris, Felony Possession of Methamphetamine, Felony Possession with Intent to Manufacture, Sell, Distribute Methamphetamine, Felony Possession of Firearm by Convicted Felon, Felony Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Crime, Misdemeanor Possession of Drug Related Objects.

Tristan Cable Brown, age 18, Young Harris, Felony Possession of Methamphetamine, Felony Theft by Taking, Misdemeanor Possession of Drug Related Objects.

Jaelyn Nicole Strachan, age 23, Young Harris, Felony Theft by Taking, Misdemeanor Possession of Drug Related Objects.

Savanna Linn Wages Silvey, age 20, Young Harris, Felony Possession of Methamphetamine and Felony Possession of Schedule II Control

Sheriff Ken Henderson is pleased with our proactive approaches to keeping our community safe and our initiatives will continue.



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## FIRST RESPONDER APPRECIATION AT TOWNS COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

Sheriff Henderson would like to thank the Towns County High School Student Council for hosting the First Responders Appreciation this morning with coffee and donuts.



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## FELONY TRAFFIC STOP RESULTS IN FOUR ARRESTS

On Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, a Towns County resident reported that he was purchasing a Kubota Excavator from an individual valued at \$23,000. He became concerned the equipment might be stolen.

Sheriff's Investigators initiated an investigation and determined the equipment was a rental out of Tennessee.

Wednesday evening, a sting was set-up to make a purchase of the equipment. The transaction was made by an undercover Towns County Investigator after which the individuals were attempting to flee and attempted to run over one of our Deputies. A felony pursuit began on Highway 17/76 toward Young Harris and continued for two and a half miles where speeds did not exceed 60 mph. During the pursuit, the suspect attempted to ram our patrol units. We are very fortunate one of our officers was not seriously injured or killed as one of the suspects, wearing an ankle monitor, was out on bond from Dekalb County for Murder.

A felony stop was initiated on Hwy 76 at Hwy 66. Four suspects were in the truck and taken into custody without incident. The suspects were heavily armed with two 10 mm handguns with extended magazines, which were confiscated from the suspects.

The following individuals were arrested and charged as follows:

Dekarius Christopher Pitts, age 22, Dacula, GA

- Three counts of Felony Aggravated Assault on Law Enforcement Officers
- Felony Fleeing and Attempting to Elude Law Enforcement Officers
- Felony Tampering with Evidence
- Felony Obstruction of a Law Enforcement Officer
- Felony Theft by Conversion
- Reckless Driving
- No Valid Insurance
- Driving on a Suspended License
- Failure to Maintain Lane
- *Further charges pending*

Zackeri Alexander Leonard, age 22, Stockbridge, GA

- Felony Possession of Stolen Property
- Felony Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Crime
- Possession of Marijuana

Jontavius Clark, age 23, Decatur, GA

- Felony Theft by Conversion
- Felony Obstruction of a Law Enforcement Officer
- Felony Fleeing and Attempting to Elude Law Enforcement
- Felony Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon
- No Valid Insurance

Ronequa Shaunae Jones, age 22, Decatur, GA

- Felony Possession of Stolen Property

Sheriff Ken Henderson commends the deputies on the stop. Their training and experience paid off to avoid a dangerous felony stop. Investigators indicate this is an organized crime ring out of the Dekalb/Lithonia area, and the investigation continues.



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## ONGOING INVESTIGATION INTO ORGANIZED CRIME RING

A continuing investigation by Towns County Sheriff's Investigators, into an organized crime ring dealing in stolen construction equipment.

Information was received in reference to a stolen Excavator from a business in Calhoun, GA. The individuals were attempting to sell this equipment to a Towns County resident.

Wednesday evening, December 13th, the stolen property was located at the Dollar General in Young Harris. Towns County Sheriff's Office investigators and deputies, along with Young Harris College Police, converged on the location where the suspects were beginning to unload the equipment. The subjects attempted to escape, ramming a Young Harris Police vehicle.

Investigators, deputies, and Young Harris Police made a Felony stop and three suspects were taken into custody without incident or injuries.

Sheriff Ken Henderson stated the commitment and determination of our Investigators along with the quick apprehension and takedown of the individuals without anyone being injured is outstanding work.

This appears to be organized criminal activity working in the North Georgia area. Our investigation will continue.

Towns County Sheriff's Office is working with other jurisdictions experiencing similar activity.

The following individuals were arrested and charged:

Keshaun James Means, age 22, Decatur, GA

- Felony Aggravated Assault Against Law Enforcement Officer When Engaged on Official Duty
- Felony Fleeing or Attempting to Elude a Police Officer
- Felony Interference with Government Property
- Purchase, Possession, Manufacture, Distribution, or Sale of Marijuana

Juwan Quintis Cabbell, age 26, Decatur, GA

- Felony Theft by Conversion
- Obstruction of an Officer

Umeko Ann Walker, age 31, Decatur, GA

- Felony Theft by Conversion



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## AGGRAVATED ASSAULT CHARGES

On Friday, December 16th, Towns County Sheriff's Office received a domestic call at a location in Hiawassee.

A deputy enroute to the location observed a vehicle swerve off the roadway in an aggressive manner to intentionally run over a female. The vehicle struck the individual causing bodily injury. The driver, identified as Samantha Aguirrie Beck, age 40, of Hiawassee was arrested without incident. The victim was transported to a local hospital. Georgia State Patrol was contacted to work the traffic incident. She is charged with Aggravated Assault, DUI - Driving Under the Influence of Drugs, Disorderly Conduct, Failure to Drive within a Single Lane, and Improper Backing.

Also arrested without incident was Royce Lee Beck, age 40, of Hiawassee for Terroristic Threats and Acts.

Department of Family and Children's Services was called, and the care of the injured female and another child were turned over to them.

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## SHOP WITH THE SHERIFF

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Towns County Sheriff's Office, Young Harris College Police, Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw and staff, as well as the Towns County Sheriff's Auxiliary, along with 40 children was graciously received at the Blairsville Walmart yesterday afternoon for the 2nd Annual SHOP WITH THE SHERIFF.

Towns County Sheriff's Office began the event at Towns County Recreation Center by providing an after-school snack of pizza from Papas Pizza to Go. The kids then boarded our version of the Polar Express (aka the bus) and traveled in a caravan led by Sheriff Ken Henderson.

The kids were greeted by a multitude of volunteers ready to assist them in finding the items on their Christmas lists. They not only grabbed toys and other things they wanted, but many of them wanted to make sure their parents and siblings would have a gift under the tree as well.

Staff and volunteers once again witnessed Christmas through the eyes of a child, having as much fun as the children themselves.

The management and staff at Walmart were extremely accommodating and helpful once again this year. Sheriff Ken Henderson expressed his appreciation to everyone by stating, "I have once again been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support by our community, citizens and businesses who made donations to make this event possible." He continued by saying "If this does not move your heart and get you in the Christmas spirit, nothing will."



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## SHERIFF'S OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARADE

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Despite the dreary weather the parade was a huge success!!!!

Sheriff Henderson would like to thank all those who braved the rain to participate in the TCSO Christmas parade and to those who came out to watch.

Congratulations to the following winners  
1st place - Peach State Federal Credit Union  
2nd place- Towns County Lions Club  
3rd place- Pine Grove Church

Sheriff Henderson and his staff would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas.



## CHRISTMAS WEEKEND DRUG INVESTIGATIONS

**On Saturday, December 24th**, Towns County Sheriff's Office Drug Unit continues an intense investigation into a suspect for transporting illegal drugs. The suspect was identified as Randy Delain Ledford.

Drug Investigators, K-9 Deputies, and Clay County Sheriff's Office converged on the suspect at the Windy Hill Gas Station on Highway 66. An amount of drugs field tested positive for Methamphetamine laced with a high amount of Fentanyl, also containing Cocaine.

Randy Delain Ledford, age 34, Blairsville, was arrested and charged with Felony Possession of Methamphetamine with additional charges pending.

Sheriff Ken Henderson stated, "This is a highly dangerous cocktail for potential overdose," adding a thank you to our investigators and K-9 deputies working tirelessly during the Christmas Holiday to get these highly dangerous drugs off the streets and out of our community.

The investigation is continuing.

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**On Monday, December 26th**, Towns County Sheriff's Investigators, initiated a traffic stop on 1400 Hwy 66, Young Harris.

Probable cause was established, and the vehicle was searched and approximately eight (8) ounces of Methamphetamine laced with Fentanyl, which field tested positive.

Mathew Carl Simon was arrested, and the investigation revealed that Simon is a member of the "Ghostface Gangsters" out of Union County.

Mathew Carl Simon, age 48, Blairsville was arrested and charged with:

- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine
- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine with Intent to Distribute
- Felony Trafficking Methamphetamine
- Window Tint Violation

Sheriff Henderson commends the hard-working Drug Investigation Unit and their commitment to working long hours during the Christmas Holiday to keep our community safe.

The investigation is ongoing.

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### UPCOMING EVENTS:

Spring 2023 - Sheriff's Law Enforcement Academy

### COMMUNITY WATCH:

Our Community Watch groups continue to grow. If you and your neighbors would like to join us in organizing a community or neighborhood watch in your community please call Jill Gittens, (706) 896-4444 or email her at [jgittenstcso@townscountygga.com](mailto:jgittenstcso@townscountygga.com)

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