

The Badge



Towns County Sheriff's Office News



From the desk of Sheriff Ken Henderson:

Every opportunity we get to attend community events is essential to our partnership with our communities, and our goal is to keep citizens informed about our progress. During my campaign, I made a promise to institute a drug initiative to aggressively pursue the illegal drug dealers and cartel who are bringing these dangerous drugs into our community. At that time I stated, "If you are dealing drugs in Towns County, I'm coming for you," I meant just that!

In 2021, Towns County Sheriff's Office had a total of 85 drug arrests, with 2022 having 105.

Last week, I was contacted by the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration concerning their issuance of a Public Safety Alert about a new illegal and highly dangerous drug named Tranq. You can read about Tranq on page two of this newsletter.

Towns County Sheriff's Office deputies and investigators remain vigilant in our war on drugs coming into our community, as well as serving and protecting our residents and visitors.

The work we do is challenging and difficult but is all worthwhile. It is made more fulfilling having great citizens supporting us. Thank you for your support. We'll see you around the county.

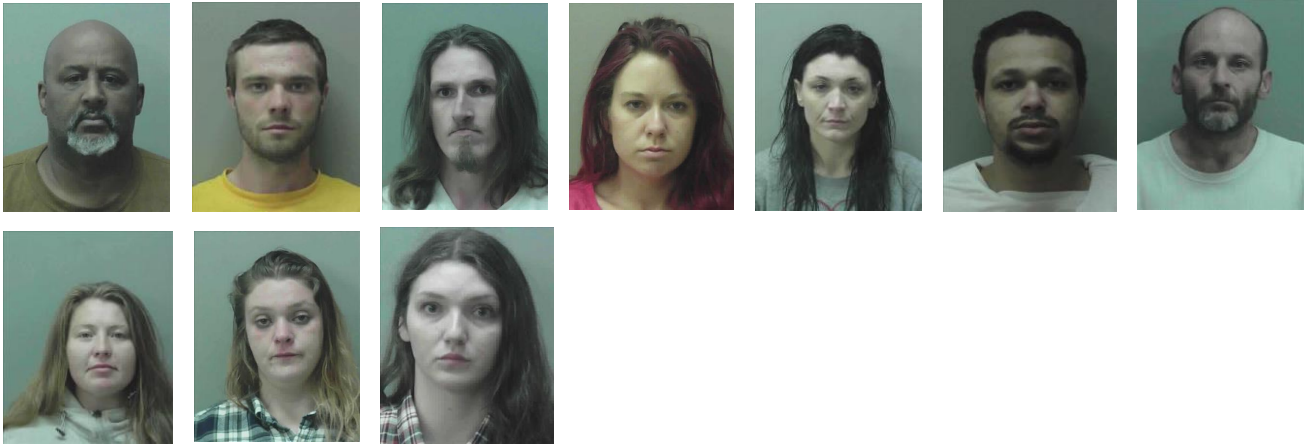
TOWNS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE IS HIRING

Job description and minimum requirements can be found on page 9-10.

SHERIFF'S LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY

We are now accepting applications for our next Sheriff's Law Enforcement Academy which will begin April 18, 2023, and will be held each Tuesday from 10:00-Noon. This is a 10-week course offered to all Towns County residents, employees, and business owners that are age 21 and over. During the course, presenters from the Towns County Sheriff's Office and guest speakers from other partnership agencies will provide a better understanding of operations through hands-on training and law enforcement knowledge. You can pick up an application at the Towns County Sheriff's Office. Applications are also available at <https://www.townscountysheriff.org/tcsa>. Completed applications may be dropped off at the Towns County Sheriff's Office, located at 4070 State Highway 339, Young Harris. The deadline to apply is Friday, April 14, 2023. For more information you can contact us at (706) 896-4444.

MARCH DRUG ARRESTS:



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



Accidental activation of Towns County Schools new security app led to a school wide lockdown yesterday morning. Towns County Sheriff's Office School Resource Officers and deputies responded accordingly and were on the scene within 30 seconds of the alarm's activation location.

Sheriff Ken Henderson was pleased with the quick response to this alarm and stated that this is a clear example that if an active shooter situation were to ever occur that his deputies will not hesitate to head to the threat immediately whether it be a real or false alarm.

Sheriff Henderson further stated this was good training for everyone involved with the new security app and proves that working together with School Resource Officers, deputies and Towns County Schools Administration to keep our children safe.

PUBLIC SAFETY ALERT

Sheriff Henderson wants to alert residents that the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration has issued a rare "Public Safety Alert" concerning the veterinary tranquilizer Xylazine. Xylazine is not approved for use by humans and is being added to fentanyl in an effort to extend the duration of the "high" produced by ingesting fentanyl. These two drugs that has the street name "Tranq" and can easily lead to a fatal overdose and in non-fatal instances can create open flesh wounds that require amputation.

"Xylazine is making the deadliest drug threat our country has ever faced, fentanyl, even deadlier," said DEA Administrator Milgram. "DEA has seized xylazine and fentanyl mixtures in 48 of 50 States. The DEA Laboratory System is reporting that in 2022 approximately 23% of fentanyl powder and 7% of fentanyl pills seized by the DEA contained xylazine." Xylazine and Fentanyl drug mixtures place users at a higher risk of suffering a fatal drug poisoning. Because xylazine is not an opioid, naloxone (Narcan) does not reverse its effects. Still, experts always recommend administering naloxone if someone might be suffering a drug poisoning. People who inject drug mixtures containing xylazine also can develop severe wounds, including necrosis—the rotting of human tissue—that may lead to amputation.

Sheriff Henderson stated that the Towns County Sheriff's Office has not come in contact with this deadly combination here in our county but will remain ever vigilant to any and all threats to the citizens of Towns County.

CONVICTED



As Towns County Sheriff's Office continues our Drug Suppression Initiatives, the District Attorney's Office is busy prosecuting offenders. As a result, the following individuals have been convicted and sentenced during the January 2023 term.

• **Kevin Joseph Sears, age 66, Young Harris, GA:**

- * Sale of Methamphetamine
 - * 20-year sentence, to serve five (5) in confinement
 - * \$5,000.00 fine
- * Sale of Methamphetamine
 - * 20-year sentence, to serve five (5) in confinement, concurrent with above sentence
 - * Possession with Intent to Distribute Methamphetamine
 - * 20-year sentence, to serve five (5) in confinement, concurrent with above sentence
- * Possession of Methamphetamine
 - * 3-year sentence, concurrent with above sentence

• **Johnathan Clyde Dills, age 41, Young Harris, GA:**

- * Possession of a Schedule II Controlled Substance
 - * 3-year sentence to serve 120-160 days (deemed served) with the balance to be served on probation
 - * \$2,500.00 fine
 - * Possession of Drug Related Objects
 - * 12-month sentence to run consecutive to above sentence

• **Bryson Daniel Wood, age 19, Cleveland, GA:**

- * Violation of Georgia Controlled Substances Act
 - * 3-years of probation
 - * \$1,250.00 fine

• **Tristan Cable Brown, age 20, Young Harris, GA:**

- * Possession of Methamphetamine
 - * 3- years of probation
 - * \$2,500 fine

• **Brenda Anne Baldwin, age 50, Hiawassee, GA:**

- * Possession of Methamphetamine
 - * 3- year sentence with the first 60 days in confinement (deemed served)
 - * \$2,500.00 fine

• **Christopher Dwight Barnard, age 21, Hayesville, NC:**

- * Sale of Methamphetamine
 - * 20- year sentence, must serve six (6) years in confinement
- * Sale of Methamphetamine
 - * 20-year sentence must serve six (6) years in confinement, to run concurrent with above sentence.
- * Sale of Marijuana
 - * 10- year sentence, must serve six (6) years in confinement, to run concurrent with above sentence.

• **Marquis Gwan Ford, age 42, Bennettsville, SC:**

- * Possession of Methamphetamine
 - * Three (3) years of probation
 - * \$2,500.00 fine
- * Possession of Schedule II Controlled Substance
 - * 3-years of probation, to run concurrent with above sentence
- * Possession of Drug Related Objects
 - * 12 months of probation, to run concurrent with above sentence
 - * \$500.00 fine

• **Jolena Marvilia Nichols, age 53, Hiawassee, GA:**

- * Two counts Sale of Methamphetamine
 - * 15-year sentence, must serve six (6) in confinement
 - * \$2,500.00 fine
- * Two counts Possession of a Schedule I Controlled Substance
 - * 3- year sentence, to run concurrent with above sentence

Sheriff Ken Henderson would like to thank all the Towns County Sheriff's Office deputies, K-9s and investigators for their hard work to take these drugs out of our community and would also like to thank the Towns County District Attorney's Office and the Towns County Clerk of Court Office for all the hard work they have done to bring these cases to a close.

STOLEN EQUIPMENT

On Thursday March 9th, Towns County Sheriff's Office investigators received a tip in reference to a stolen CAT 305E out of Spartanburg, SC.

Sheriff's Office investigators located the equipment at a residence on Bugscuffle Road. It appears one of the perpetrators ran from deputies into a wooded area.

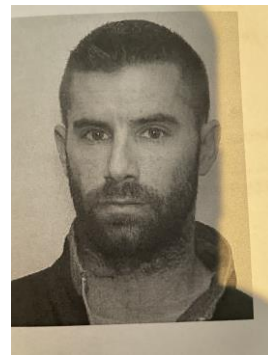
Towns County Sheriff's Office drone was called out to assist in locating the subject near Macedonia bridge on Hwy 76 East, but heavy rain in the area impacted drone operations.

The suspect has been identified as Brandon Scott Anderson, age 35, South Carolina, and he is still at large. During a search of the vehicle, Methamphetamine and a 9mm carbine were confiscated. A stolen CAT 305E, valued at \$58,000, was released back to the owner.

Terrie Eugenia Miles, age 27, Liberty, SC, was arrested and charged:

- Felony Theft by Receiving
- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine
- Felony Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony

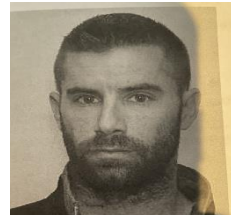
Brandon Scott Anderson, age 35, South Carolina, is wanted for Felony Theft by Receiving Stolen Property. Sheriff Ken Henderson commends the outstanding investigation into this case, which is still active and ongoing.



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

BODY DISCOVERED IN LAKE CHATUGE

An investigation that began as a tip in reference to a stolen piece of equipment out of South Carolina in early March has led to the discovery of a body floating off Hwy. 76 near a dock close to the edge of the water. The body has been identified as Brandon Scott Anderson, 35, of South Carolina. Anderson was wanted for Felony Theft by Receiving Stolen Property and had run from Towns County Sheriff's deputies on March 9th near the same area where his body was discovered wearing the same clothing, he was seen fleeing from the deputies in. Anderson has been identified by his driver's license which was still on his person.



Sheriff Ken Henderson stated that investigators with the Towns County Sheriff's Office along with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation are investigating and the body has been transported to the GBI Crime Lab for a cause death. No evidence of foul play is suspected.

SUMMER HEAT OF TOWNS COUNTY

Tuesday afternoon, March 14th, the Georgia Mountain Pickleball Group 501(c)3, presented the Summer Heat of Towns County 501(c)3 Board of Directors with a generous donation for their organization. Sheriff Ken Henderson, Chief Deputy Gene Moss as well as Young Harris College Chief of Police Robbie Rich and Hiwassee Police Department representatives were on hand for the presentation. Towns County First Responders and Summer Heat of Towns County would like to thank The Georgia Mountain Pickleball Group for their continued support.

Sheriff Henderson said we have wonderful people in our community who continue to support Towns County First Responders.

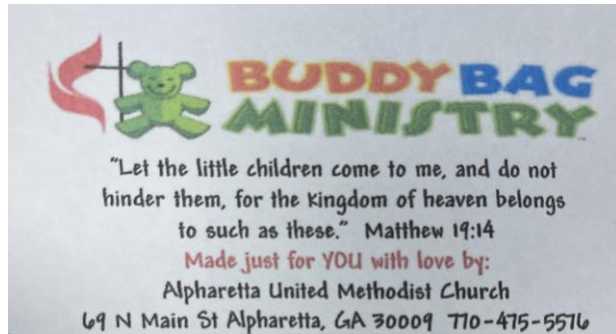


BUDDY BAGS

Tuesday, March 14th, two members of Alpharetta United Methodist Church, Pam Schiftic and Susan Garrard, came to visit and donate Buddy Bags from the church's Buddy Bag Ministry. Each bag contains both a handmade bear and blanket along with various books and crayons.

Towns County Sheriff's Office deputies will have these available when responding to a call for service, should a child be involved in a frightening situation.

Sheriff Ken Henderson is excited for our deputies to have these available. Sheriff Henderson would like to thank both Pam and Susan for making the long journey to deliver these, as well as a thank you the members of Alpharetta United Methodist Church for their dedication to the children of our community.



DRONE

March 9, 2023, Deputy Robbie Rich completed a 32-hour class at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth, GA.

Deputy Rich works part time for Towns County Sheriff's Office and is the Chief of Police at Young Harris College. He is a FAA Part 107 Licensed Remote Pilot, which is all the State of Georgia requires to operate a drone commercially. He has also passed the Division of Aviation North Carolina UAS Operator's Knowledge Test and has obtained his permit to operate in North Carolina as well.

The training, Small Unmanned Aircraft Use for Public Safety, provided students with an understanding of the operational skills for using small, unmanned aircraft (sUAS) flight for public safety operations.

The operations covered were Missing Person Search and Rescue, Trouble Unknown/Missing Person Search and Rescue, Haz-Mat Incidents, Crime Scene/Traffic Accident Scene mapping, and Active Shooter Incidents.

This training gave the pilot the knowledge to evaluate, plan, set up, and execute flight operations.

The Towns County Sheriff's Office drone is registered with the FAA.

Sheriff Ken Henderson is pleased Deputy Rich has completed his training and our drone is ready and fully operational at a moment's notice.



METHAMPHETAMINE ARREST

On the afternoon of Sunday March 19, 2023, Towns County Drug Investigators based on a tip intercepted drugs that were being brought into the county.

Drug investigators confiscated 24 grams of methamphetamine laced with fentanyl that field tested positive on the scene, marijuana, cash, and a small amount of hundred dollars bills that were counterfeit.

Dwayne Emanuel Gibson, 62, Salisbury, NC, was charged and arrested on the following:

- Felony, Possession of Methamphetamine
- Misdemeanor, Possession of Marijuana

Sheriff Henderson would once again like to thank the Towns County Drug Investigators, Deputies and K-9 Deputies who work tirelessly to keep our county safe and drug free.



TOWNS COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL JOB FAIR

Monday, March 20th, Towns County High School held a Job Fair for students in grades 9-12. Towns County Sheriff's Office was pleased to have a display and a chance to meet and speak with the students about career opportunities within our office and law enforcement.

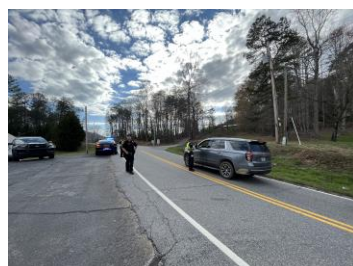
Sheriff Ken Henderson stated it is always a great day when we have the opportunity to interact with the younger generation within our county and to see a new generation interested in law enforcement.



SAFETY CHECK

Thursday evening, March 23rd, Towns County Sheriff's deputies, K-9 and drug investigators conducted a safety check in the Gumlog area.

According to Sheriff Ken Henderson, Towns County Sheriff's Office will continue our proactive approach to keeping our roadways and our community safe. More safety checks will be forthcoming and random.



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Thursday evening, March 23rd, Towns County Sheriff Ken Henderson spoke to the Pinecrest Homeowners Association at Paradise Bar and Grill. He spoke about the changes he has implemented in his first 2 ½ years in office. Among those topics were changing the image of the Sheriff's Office's vehicles and uniforms, securing a grant to install computers in the vehicles, last year's Summer Heat Fundraiser raising the money needed for the software, the donation of a drone by two Towns County residents, and a 23 percent increase in the number of drug arrests between 2021 and 2022.

He also touched on the Towns County Sheriff's Office Neighborhood Watch program and Sheriff's Law Enforcement Academy. Community Relations Coordinator Jill Gittens explained the details of both with the group.

Chief Deputy Gene Moss presented information about the newest deadly drug that has already been found in 48 states named Tranq.

Sheriff Henderson was happy to see such a large number of residents in attendance, and stated he was honored to be invited to their homeowner's meeting and is always ready to share current information with Towns County residents.



NEW IN-CAR EQUIPMENT

Towns County Sheriff's Office is proud to announce the new in-car computers and software installation is now complete and all units are fully functional.

With this new equipment, the Sheriff's Office has evolved into the 21st century and deputies are now able to:

- Complete Incident Reports and Accident Reports
- Access the GCIC and NCIC network to obtain:
 - o Vehicle information.
 - o Driver's information.
 - o Information from a serial number on a gun.
 - o Boat registration information.
- GPS coordinates for other deputies to increase deputy safety.
- Inmate records

This entire system was purchased at no cost to taxpayers by Towns County Sheriff's Office obtaining a \$26,000 grant which purchased all hardware needed in the vehicles. The software was paid for with \$15,000 which was raised by a group of Towns County citizens who organized the Summer Heat Music Festival which was held August 2022.

Sheriff Ken Henderson stated "I am extremely proud to bring this new technology into the Sheriff's Office, and even more proud it was able to be done without any financial burden to taxpayers. This is technology our office desperately needed to enable our deputies to work more efficiently and effectively. "



TWO ARRESTED FOR POSSESSION OF METHAMPHETAMINE

On Thursday evening March 23 during a routine safety check in the Gumlog area a Towns County Sheriff K-9 alerted on a vehicle. A probable cause search of the vehicle resulted in the confiscation of methamphetamine which field tested positive for fentanyl and marijuana.

The following individuals were arrested and charged with the following:

Amber Lynn Rogers, 27, Hayesville, NC

- Misdemeanor, Possession and Use of Drug Related Object.
- Felony, possession of methamphetamine.
- Felony, possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.
- Misdemeanor, possession of marijuana.
- Felony, cruelty to children, first degree.

Brett Andrew McCray, 32, Hayesville, NC

- Misdemeanor, possession, and use of drug related object.
- Felony, possession of methamphetamine.
- Felony, possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.
- Misdemeanor, possession of marijuana.
- Felony, cruelty to children, first degree.

Also in the car was a six-month-old child unrestrained in the vehicle who was turned over to family members on the scene.

Sheriff Henderson has stated in the past and will continue to drive home the importance of keeping the citizens of Towns County safe and this county drug free.



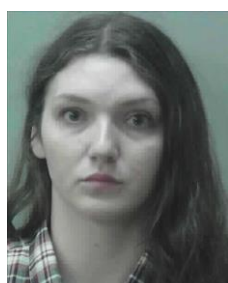
METHAMPHETAMINE, HEROIN, FENTANYL AND COUNTERFEIT FENTANYL

On Wednesday, March 29th, Towns County Sheriff's Office Drug Investigators set up a drug buy bust at the Hiawasse Budget Inn along with Hiawasse Police Department. Methamphetamine, Heroin, and Fentanyl, which field tested positive, was confiscated, along with cash and a bag of counterfeit Fentanyl.

Kaitlyn Brianna Kincaid, age 27, Marble NC was arrested and charged with:

- Felony Possession of Fentanyl
- Felony Possession of Heroin
- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine
- Possession of Counterfeit Controlled Substance with Intent to Distribute

Sheriff Ken Henderson is proud of deputies and investigators for their continued vigilance against illegal drugs being brought into, and distributed, in our community.



TOWNS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE IS HIRING DEPUTIES

The Towns County Sheriff's Office is currently accepting applications for the position of Deputy Sheriff. Applicants do not have to be certified to apply; however, preference may be given to Georgia POST-certified applicants. Candidates must have a sincere desire to serve the public and the ability to carry out assignments fairly and impartially. Candidates must be able to work flexible and rotating shifts, including nights and weekends.

Deputy Sheriffs in the Uniform Patrol Division account for the greatest allocation of law enforcement resources and represent the primary delivery system of law enforcement services for the citizens and businesses of Towns County. Through the use of strategic patrol car allocation, the Uniform Patrol Division deploys patrol units in the various areas of the county and during the hours of the day that enable a rapid response to citizens' requests for law enforcement services as well as provide for optimum patrol coverage for the prevention and suppression of crime and disorder. In addition, the high degree of police visibility in conjunction with the enforcement of traffic laws encourages the orderly and safe movement of traffic on the highways and streets within the County.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Under general supervision and in cooperation with the community deputy sheriffs perform a variety of policing and law enforcement activities. Tasks are primarily service-oriented and include patrol, investigative, and enforcement functions, to generally provide for the safety of the public, and to perform essential functions as required. Duties include an element of personal danger, exposure to adverse weather conditions, apprehending criminals, directing traffic, and transporting prisoners. Incumbents perform duties in accordance with Georgia Statutes and established departmental policies, procedures, and guidelines. The incumbent must be able to act without close supervision and must be able to exercise independent judgment. Work is reviewed through observation, conferences, and review of written work product for results obtained and adherence to established policies and procedures.

- Updated Modern Equipment
- In-Car Computers.
- Body/Car Cameras, Tasers, Ballistic Vests, and much more
- All Equipment and Uniforms Provided
- Take-Home Vehicles
- 12 Hour Rotating Shifts.
- Off Duty Employment Opportunities
- Paid Holidays, Paid Vacation, Paid Sick Leave
- Medical and Dental Insurance
- Retirement.
- Competitive Salary for the area
- Training Opportunities

JOB REQUIREMENTS

Age: 21

Education: High School Diploma or Higher.

EXPERIENCE:

Minimum Requirements

- High School Diploma or equivalent,
- Must be at least 21 years of age (applicants 20 years of age may be considered),
- Must be a U.S. citizen.
- Must not have any felony convictions. Conviction of certain misdemeanor offenses may deem the applicant unacceptable,
- Must successfully pass an extensive character and background check,
- Must successfully pass a medical exam and drug screen,
- Must successfully pass a psychological evaluation.
- Must successfully pass a voice stress analyzer or polygraph testing,
- Certified applicants must be in good standing with Georgia POST with no history of suspensions, revocations, or open investigations. Closed POST investigations will be reviewed,
- Non-certified applicants must meet requirements to obtain and maintain Georgia POST certification,
- Must possess a valid Georgia driver's license with a good driver's history,
- Must be able to perform the essential functions of the job; and
- Must not have a pattern of illegal drug use or abuse of prescription drugs.

****ATTENTION APPLICANTS WITH PRIOR LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCE****

Background investigators will meet with your former law enforcement employers/supervisors and obtain copies of personnel files which will be reviewed thoroughly by command staff. Those who were terminated from a law enforcement agency resigned under questionable circumstances/in lieu of termination or have documented disciplinary issues of concern in personnel files may be disqualified.

Job Type: Full-time, Pay: \$37,440.00 for non-certified \$44,720.00 after academy completion or certified.

Benefits:

- Dental insurance
- Flexible schedule
- Health, Dental, Vision and Life insurance
- Paid time off
- Retirement plan

Schedule:

- 12-hour shift
- Day shift
- Holidays
- Night shift
- Overtime

You must submit an application packet to be considered. Application packets can be found at townscountysheriff.org

If you would like to receive the monthly newsletter, please contact Community Relations Coordinator Jill Gittens at (706) 896-4444 or jgittenstcso@townscountyga.com

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