

The Badge

January 2024
Issue Seventeen



Towns County Sheriff's Office News



From the desk of Sheriff Ken Henderson:

I would like to take this opportunity to extend our best wishes for a safe and prosperous New Year from all of us at the Towns County Sheriff's Office. We look forward to helping make 2024 a wonderful and safe year for our county and our community.

It is my hope that 2024 will be a year that our community frequently extends a helping hand to their neighbors, friends, family, coworkers and strangers in need.

During my 2020 campaign I promised we were going to take these illegal drugs off our streets and out of Towns County. Our deputies and drug investigators work diligently to locate the individuals transporting these drugs into our county, those individuals selling them, and those individuals purchasing them as well.

In each month's newsletter we publish the photos of those arrested for drug charges, from the previous month. However, in this issue, you will not only see the arrests made in December, but the 77 drug arrests made in 2023. The majority of these arrests involved Fentanyl.

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid similar to Morphine but 100 times more potent. Fentanyl comes in all kinds of forms but the rainbow colors that mimic candy and/or prescription drugs is a clear and present danger. It is made in China and shipped to Mexico then crosses the border to Mexican cartel in the United States to distribute for sale in local communities. Fentanyl is the most common causes of overdose death, it is impossible to tell if your drugs contain Fentanyl, it is low in cost for drug dealers and the dealers are mixing Fentanyl with other drugs.

As we begin a new year, Towns County Sheriff's Office will remain committed to our drug initiatives. If you suspect drug activity in your area, I would like to remind you that you can report suspicious activity through our website, www.townscountysheriff.org, or by phone at 706-896-3697. I can assure you; you will remain anonymous.

Happy New Year, and I look forward to continuing our work together in 2024.

Towns County Sheriff's Office Mission Statement

Our Mission is to modernize the Towns County Sheriff's Office and to provide quality enforcement services using proactive enforcement, community partnership and problem solving, which will create a safe, secure, and desirable living and working environment for our citizens and visitors.

DECEMBER DRUG ARRESTS:



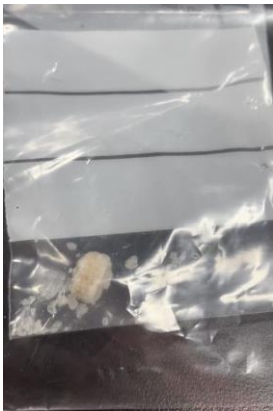
ALL PERSONS ARE PRESUMED INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY IN A COURT OF LAW.

DECEMBER DRUG ARRESTS

On Sunday, December 10th, during a two-week investigation into drug activity at the Sunoco located on Highway 17 at the North Carolina state line, Towns County Sheriff’s Office drug investigators, K-9, and uniform patrol deputies conducted concentrated patrols and surveillance of the business. A traffic stop was conducted on Young Harris Mountain by a patrol K-9 unit. The patrol K-9 conducted a free air search and alerted on the vehicle. Probable cause was developed, and a search of the vehicle resulted in a large quantity of Methamphetamine and pure Fentanyl which was seized and field-tested positive. Nicholas James Lunsford, age 40, Young Harris, who was an attendant at Sunoco, was arrested and charged with:

- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine
- Felony Possession of Fentanyl
- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine with Intent to Distribute
- Felony Crossing Guard Lines with Weapon/Drugs/Intoxicants

Sheriff Ken Henderson is proud to get this Fentanyl, which is a very dangerous drug, off the streets. Towns County Sheriff’s Office will continue our concentrated patrols in drug areas. Our war on drugs continues. An investigation is continuing.



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

A month-long investigation into drug activity in the Bugscuffle area resulted in a traffic stop on Sunday December 17th at the intersection of Main Street and Bell Creek Road in the City of Hiawassee. Concentrated patrols in the Bugscuffle area identified drug activity. Probable cause was developed, and a search of the vehicle resulted in the confiscation of Methamphetamine that field tested positive as well as a handgun.

The occupant of the vehicle was determined to be a convicted felon and was arrested. William David Ledford, age 48, Hiawassee was charged with:

- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine with Intent to Distribute
- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine
- Felony Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon
- Felony Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Crime
- Possession and Use of Drug Related Objects

Sheriff Ken Henderson commends the hard work of our drug investigators and patrol deputies for their continuing success in our fight against drugs.



On December 23rd, Towns County Sheriff's Office drug investigators received a tip of a suspicious vehicle containing drugs in the Marathon gas station parking lot on Highway 75 North.

The vehicle was located along with a suspect. Probable cause was developed, and a search of the vehicle resulted in the confiscation of Suboxone strips, Methamphetamine, which field tested positive, and drug related objects.

Katelyn Ruth Ensley, age 22, Blairsville was arrested and charged with:

- Felony Possession of Schedule II Controlled Substance
- Possession and Use of Drug Related Objects



WANTED

Sunday, December 10th, during concentrated patrol and surveillance for drug activity at Sunoco on Highway 17 at the North Carolina State Line a traffic stop was conducted of a known individual that refused to stop and proceeded into North Carolina.

The short pursuit was terminated for safety issues and warrants were issued for Wayne Bruce Odom.



Odom is charged with:

- *Felony Fleeing or Attempting to Elude
- *Seatbelt Violation

Odom remains at large. If you have any information as to the whereabouts of Wayne Bruce Odom, please contact the Towns County Sheriff's Office at 706-896-4444. You can remain anonymous.

CONTINUING PARTNERSHIP

Tuesday, December 5th, Towns County Sheriff Ken Henderson and Chief Deputy Gene Moss met with our partners in law enforcement, Clay County Sheriff Mark Buchanan and Chief Deputy Todd Wingate at Brasstown Valley Resort.

The discussion focused on common problems affecting both jurisdictions, as well as sharing information and community relations.

Sheriff Ken Henderson states that these two agencies are joined together to better serve our citizens. Sheriff Henderson is committed to working with our partnering agencies.



TOWNS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Towns County Sheriff's Office held its annual Christmas party Tuesday, December 5th at Young Harris College.

Sheriff Ken Henderson and staff were overwhelmed with kindness and graciousness from the Sodexo kitchen staff and servers who were on hand to serve over 150 people in attendance.

Annual awards were handed out to the following:

Sons of the American Revolution Award- Sgt. Bryan Forsyth

Deputy of the Year- Deputy Keanu Nguyen

Detention Officer of the Year- Detention Officer Phillip Ivester

Employee of the Year- Major James Baldwin

Community Service Award was bestowed to Mr. Jacky Jones who was unfortunately unable to attend.



SHOP WITH THE SHERIFF DONATIONS

Jon and Rebecca Parwana, owners of Best Quick Stop Citgo, Lakeview Store, Cornerstone, and Ameri Ventor Texaco, presented Sheriff Ken Henderson with a donation to Shop with the Sheriff. Sheriff Henderson would like to thank Jon and Rebecca for their generous donation and support.

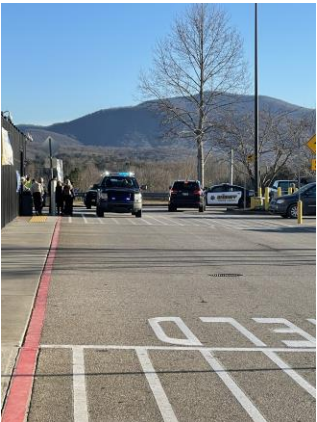


Jeff Batten with Lake 97.7 WJUL – The Greatest Music Ever Made stopped by with a generous donation to Shop with a Sheriff. Sheriff Henderson is always appreciative and overwhelmed at the kindness and generosity shown to the children of Towns County.



SHOP WITH THE SHERIFF

Towns County Sheriff's Office, Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw and staff, as well as the Towns County Sheriff's Auxiliary, along with 45 children bombarded the aisles of the Blairsville Walmart where they were received by the smiling and ready to help staff. Towns County Sheriff's Office began the event at Stephens Lodge in Young Harris by providing an after school snack of pizza from Papas Pizza to Go. The kids then boarded a bus and traveled in a caravan led by Sheriff Ken Henderson to the Blairsville Walmart. The kids were greeted by droves of deputies and 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. 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."



SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN

The Towns County Sheriff's Office Christmas Parade is in the history books!

Sheriff Henderson would like to thank those who braved the windy, cold and rainy conditions and came out to either participate or watch the parade.

Sheriff Henderson would also like to congratulate the following for their amazing floats.

1st place- Summer Heat of Towns County

2nd place- Kenny Penrod Construction

3rd place- Mulkeys Wreckers Service

"Community is much more than belonging to something; it's about doing something together that makes belonging matter"

Thank you again to all who came out.



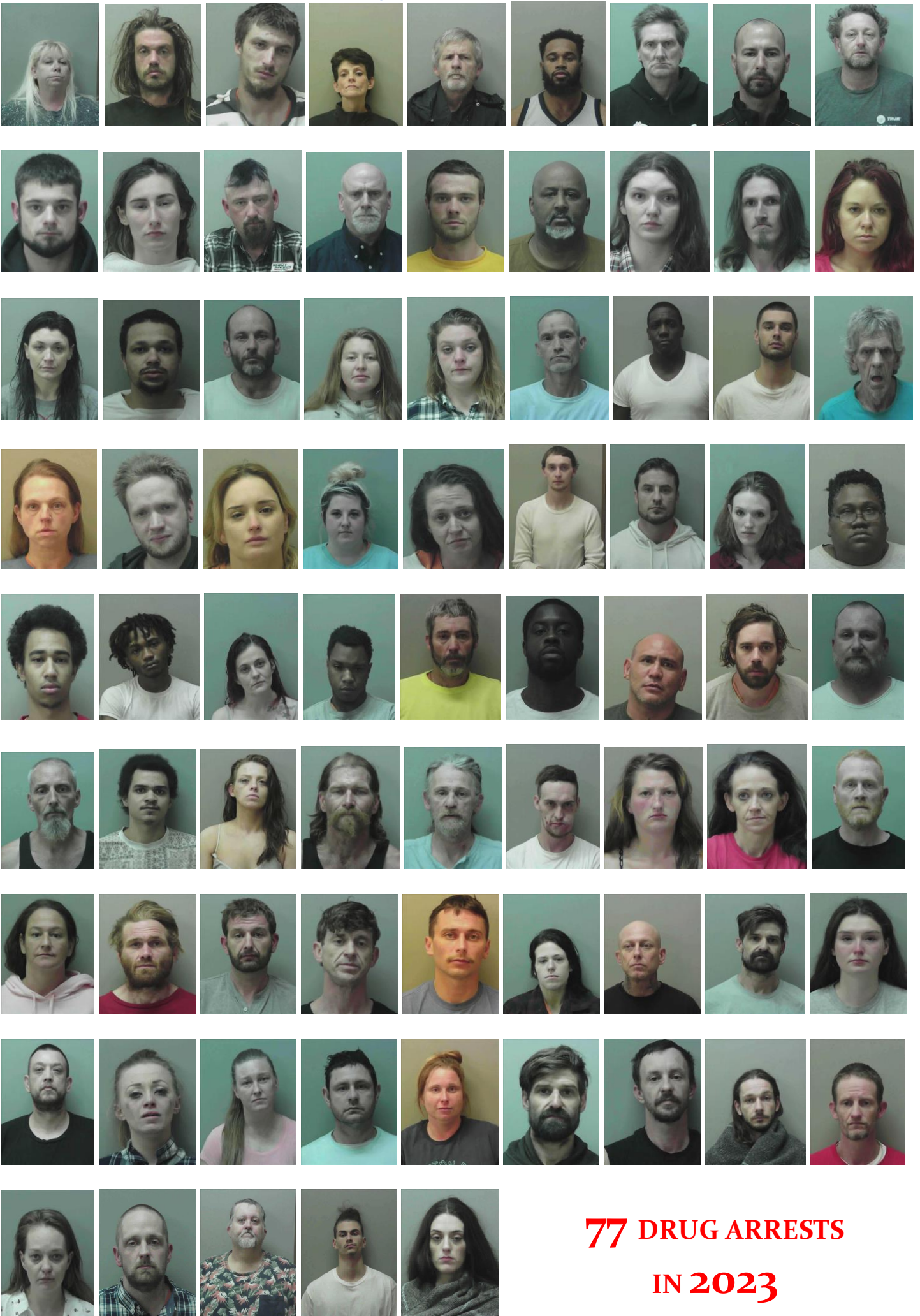
TOWNS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE & GBI INVESTIGATE

The Towns County Sheriff's Office along with the GBI are conducting a death investigation regarding human skeletal remains found in the 8000 block of Gumlog Road at a vacant residence on January 1, 2024.

The skeletal remains have not been identified. An autopsy will be performed at the GBI Medical Examiner's Office.

The Towns County Sheriff's Office and the GBI are actively investigating the death.

In Review 2023 DRUG ARRESTS



**77 DRUG ARRESTS
IN 2023**

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

Towns County Sheriff's Office
4070 State Highway 339
Young Harris, GA 30582

(706) 896-4444
www.townscountysheriff.org