



## Towns County Sheriff's Office News



### From the desk of Sheriff Ken Henderson:

As Christmas approaches and 2023 comes to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and express my gratitude to our outstanding personnel at the Towns County Sheriff's Office. Their hard work and dedication to our office and community is extensive. From everyday duties to special events such as our 1<sup>st</sup> annual Trunk or Treat event and Shop with the Sheriff.

We have a team of devoted public servants who care deeply about the community they serve. This has been a very busy year for our agency. We have accomplished so much thanks to the hard work and dedication of everyone in the Sheriff's Office. I appreciate their many accomplishments and outstanding service to this agency and to this community. While there is much work to do and there may be challenges, I believe we end this year, as we have each year, a better agency than we began.

In just a few days our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Shop with the Sheriff event will kick off with a pizza party for the children before we head to Walmart for shopping fun. It is very humbling to listen to these children as they tell you a story about each item they pick out, and even more humbling to watch them shop for their parents more than they want to shop for themselves. I think I speak for each employee and volunteer when I say we all go home feeling blessed and satisfied that we helped so many and know they will wake up Christmas morning with the things they wished for most.

I would like to remind you that we are always available to answer any questions, meet with your community groups, or speak with you individually. It is an honor to serve you and I look forward to many more years of service as your Sheriff.

In closing, the Towns County Sheriff's Office would also like to thank our community for your continued support and dedication to our office. We have been very humbled with the citizens' outreach throughout 2023 and we look forward to continuing to build these relationships with our community.

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.*

Merry  
Christmas  
AND  
HAPPY NEW YEAR

---

## 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.

---

---

---

## NOVEMBER DRUG ARRESTS:



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

---

---

## NOVEMBER DRUG ARRESTS

During an investigation into a disturbance at a local business on Thursday, November 9th, Billie Jean Eichholz-Howell, age 31, Hayesville, was observed to be heavily under the influence of drugs.

The suspect was charged with Driving Under the Influence of Drugs and Suspended Registration.

During a search of the vehicle and inventory of the contents, an amount of Methamphetamine, Heroin, and Crack Cocaine was discovered. All of these drugs field tested positive. An amount of cash was also seized from the vehicle.

Eichholz-Howell was additionally charged with:

- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine
- Felony Possession of Heroin
- Felony Possession of Cocaine
- Felony Possession with Intent to Sell and Distribute

Sheriff Ken Henderson stated it appeared these drugs were packaged for sale and is proud to get these drugs out of our community.



---

## OPERATION ROUND-UP AND A SIX WEEK DRUG INVESTIGATION YIELD ARRESTS

Towns County Sheriff's Office Drug Investigator began an investigation into drug dealers selling in Towns County. The dealers were identified through investigations and reliable informants.

Undercover investigators moved on these individuals and hand-to-hand drug transactions were made. All transactions were on video clearly showing the drugs and cash changing hands.

September 30, 2023, a hand-to-hand transaction was made with Macayla Ann Laster, age 38, Hayesville.  
October 14, 2023, a hand-to-hand transaction was made with Kimberly Faye Hall, age 24, Hiawassee.  
October 14, 2023, a hand-to-hand drug transaction was made with Jason Earl Barrow, age 43, Hiawassee.  
October 14, 2023, a hand-to-hand drug transaction was made with Brett Austin Teasley, age 28, Ellijay.  
Also on October 14, 2023, a hand-to-hand drug transaction was made with Jeremy Weaver, age 39, Ellijay.

Arrest warrants were obtained on all suspects and a round-up began Sunday November 19, 2023. Sunday, November 19, 2023 a round-up began. The following were arrested, charged, and being held without bond:

Macayla Ann Laster, age 38, Hayesville, NC

- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine
- Felony Sale of Methamphetamine
- Felony Sale of Marijuana
- Possession of Marijuana

Kimberly Faye Hall, age 24, Hiawassee

- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine
- Felony Sale of Methamphetamine

Jason Earl Barrow, age 43, Hiawassee

- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine
- Felony Sale of Methamphetamine

Brett Austin Teasley, age 28, Ellijay

- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine
- Felony Sale of Methamphetamine

Warrants were initially issued for Jeremy Weaver. It was reported that he was wanted by the Towns County Sheriff's office and was currently at large. On Tuesday November 21, 2023 Weaver was arrested and charged with:

- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine
- Felony Sale of Methamphetamine

Sheriff Ken Henderson stresses that if you are selling drugs in Towns County, we are coming after you. This 6-week investigation and long hours has resulted in getting these dealers out of our community.



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

---

Thursday, November 2nd, Towns County Sheriff Ken Henderson and Chief Deputy Gene Moss met for lunch with Clay County Sheriff Mark Buchanan and Chief Deputy Todd Wingate to discuss common issues facing both agencies.

Discussion included jurisdiction issues, common drugs problems, criminal activity, and setting goals for procedures for working together.

Sheriff Henderson was pleased with the sharing of information. Our working relationship with Clay County is important since we share a lot of the same problems and values.





## SHERIFF SPEAKS AT MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Sheriff Henderson addresses the Movers & Shakers.

Not a seat was left as Sheriff Ken Henderson took the floor this morning at the Movers & Shakers meeting held at Sundance Grill.

Sheriff Henderson touched on several topics before he handed the meeting over to several members of his staff with an emphasis placed on Shop With The Sheriff as it is near and dear to his heart and looks forward to the event every year.

Administrative Supervisor Vicki Ellis elaborated a bit more about Shop With The Sheriff specifically on how the program works, how the children are chosen, what we do on our shopping day as well as the age groups our agency covers.

- Donations are taken in and received from the good citizens, businesses and churches in our great community.
- Children's names are given to us from Towns County Family Connection, Towns County Schools and private citizens in the community who share a concern for the wellbeing of the underprivileged children in our community.
- On SHOPPING day the kids are gathered up at the end of the school day loaded on a bus taken to a location in Towns County for a pizza party then off to Walmart in Blairsville with lights and sirens blaring escorted by Sheriff Henderson and his deputies. Children are assigned to volunteers already at Walmart which include members of the Towns County Sheriff's Auxiliary, members of the community and of course Sheriff Hendersons staff and deputies. At the end of the shopping event children are escorted to their parents for pick up.
- Towns County Sheriff's Office covers kids that are in elementary school in addition to any siblings they might have in or out of school unless they are covered by another organization. We generally cover the age group of K-5 grades.

Jill Moss Gittens covered our monthly newsletter The Badge and what is involved in our day to day operations with the Towns County Sheriff's Office as well as a message from the sheriff. These monthly newsletters are easily obtained by email or mail out on a monthly basis. If you are interested in receiving this very informative newsletter please call 706-896-4444 and speak with Ms. Jill.

Sergeant Robbie Rich gave the meeting an exemplary explanation on how our drone program works. Did you know that we don't just use our drone for Towns County Sheriff's Office needs? As members of a tight knit law enforcement community with our surrounding counties we not only help our law enforcement brothers and sisters we also help Towns County Fire & Rescue in search and rescue as well as to pinpoint hot spots and the direction of which way the fires are headed. Lots of questions were asked and Sgt. Rich was more than eager to answer all and even had a drone presentation at the end of the meeting outside in the parking lot.

Sheriff Henderson opened the floor to questions to the attendees with the majority of questions asked were about drug arrests and shortage of man power. Sheriff Henderson was presented with a generous donation at the end of the meeting and as always the Movers & Shakers showed out with \$1,000.00 collected during the meeting and he would like to thank all of those who attended this morning and donated so generously to Shop With The Sheriff.



## WELCOME K-9 DARGO

Towns County Sheriff's Office would like to introduce our new K-9 handler Deputy Keanu Nguyen and K-9 Dargo.

K-9 Dargo is a dual-purpose K-9 certified in drug detection and scent tracking, capable of tracking a single human scent making him an essential part of our agency in helping if ever there was an event involving a missing child, adult or wanted subject.

Sheriff Ken Henderson is pleased to add this addition as it will greatly help in our fight against drug in our community.



## CHRIST THE KING SUPPORTS SHOP WITH THE SHERIFF

Earlier this month Christ the King Church of Hiawassee held its annual Shop With The Sheriff spaghetti dinner fundraiser and it turned out to be a huge event.

Sheriff Ken Henderson would like to thank Christ the King Church for their generous donation and for all the hard work they put into this event every year.





## BLAIRSVILLE CRUISERS SUPPORT SHOP WITH THE SHERIFF



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 [jgittens@townscountyga.com](mailto:jgittens@townscountyga.com)

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

(706) 896-4444  
[www.townscountysheriff.org](http://www.townscountysheriff.org)