

The Badge

September 2023
Issue Thirteen



Towns County Sheriff's Office News



From the desk of Sheriff Ken Henderson:

I feel a strong sense of duty to protect and serve our community in all aspects of life, including the rapidly evolving digital age where the internet and social media have become integral parts of our daily lives.

As these technological advancements enhance our lives, they bring certain risks.

I urge parents and guardians to engage in open conversations with their children about internet safety. Please educate children about the potential risks with sharing personal information online, engaging in phishing scams and interacting with strangers.

It's not just kids that are at risk. Adults in our community should remain vigilant to cyber threats. Please be cautious when sharing personal or financial information online. I advise you to regularly update passwords and ensure they are strong and unique.

A report published by the FBI reflected Americans lost \$10.3 billion in 2022 to a wide variety of internet scams.

The largest reported crimes were phishing expeditions. Phishing is defined as "the use of unsolicited email, text messages, and telephone calls purportedly from a legitimate company requesting personal, financial, and/or login credentials." The reason for such frequent success is because phishing emails will often resemble those from people victims know personally, prompting them to click on unsecured links. You may also receive an unexpected email or text message that looks like it is from a company you know and trust, like a bank, credit card or utility company. These messages may claim there's a problem with your account or your payment information, claim they need to confirm some personal or financial information, include an invoice you do not realize, want you to click on a link to make a payment, say you are eligible to register for a government refund, or offer a coupon for free stuff.

I encourage you to help our office promote a safe and secure digital environment for everyone. By staying informed and vigilant, and by implementing responsible internet and social media practices, we can mitigate risks and protect ourselves and our loved ones from potential harm.

I would also like to thank you for your continued support in our mission to uphold safety and security in every aspect of our community's lives.

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.

AUGUST DRUG ARRESTS:



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

STATE CERTIFICATION

After receiving State Certification from the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police in July under Sheriff Ken Henderson’s administration, Towns County Sheriff’s Office has received state certification seals and are proud to display the seals on our black and white patrol vehicles.



AUGUST DRUG ARRESTS

On Thursday morning August 24, 2023, Deputy Christine Moody was dispatched to a suspicious vehicle that was pulled off the roadway with headlights on and running. Upon further investigation it was discovered that the driver was highly intoxicated whereby a probable cause search of the vehicle was conducted and an amount of methamphetamine which field tested positive on the scene was confiscated.

The following person(s) was charged with the following:

Kayla Renee Campbell 32, Young Harris, GA

- Felony, possession of methamphetamine.
- Felony, possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.
- Misdemeanor, Possession and Use of Drug Related object.
- Misdemeanor, DUI

Sheriff Henderson would like to thank Deputy Moody and the Towns County Investigative team for their quick response and arrest.



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

DETENTION OFFICER ARRESTED

On August 7th, 2023, Towns County Sheriff's Office Investigators Lt. Ryan Forsyth and Sgt. Mike Franklin received a tip that a cell phone had been smuggled into the Towns County Detention Center. The Towns County Detention Center Major James Baldwin ordered an immediate lockdown of the inmates, and a search was conducted, and a cell phone was located.

Investigators revealed that a Towns County Detention Center employee had smuggled the cell phone into the Detention Center and was given to a specific inmate.

The following person(s) was formally charged with the following:

Erin Ashley Brown, 36 of Young Harris, GA

- Violation of oath by public officer
- Obtain, procure, or give inmate prohibited items without authorization.

Sheriff Ken Henderson commends the quick action and investigation into locating the cell phone and ultimately identifying the detention officer responsible. Sheriff Henderson wants it to be known that this type of behavior will not be tolerated, and that detention center security is very important.



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

SAFETY ROAD CHECK

On Thursday evening August 24, 2023, the Towns County Sheriff's Office conducted a Safety Road Check at Hwy. 66 and Gumlog Road.

Sheriff Ken Henderson is continuing to keep a pro-active approach when it comes to keeping our community and roads safe and will continue to randomly have safety checks throughout Towns County in the future.



2023 GEORGIA MOUNTAIN FAIR PARADE

On Thursday evening August 24, 2023, the Towns County Sheriff's Office conducted a Safety Road Check at Hwy. 66 and Gumlog Road.

Sheriff Ken Henderson is continuing to keep a pro-active approach when it comes to keeping our community and roads safe and will continue to randomly have safety checks throughout Towns County in the future.



SEARCH FOR RECKLESS DRIVER ENDS IN ARREST

Georgia State Patrol, and Union County Sheriff’s Office were in pursuit of a reckless driver coming into Towns County on Hwy 76 East. The vehicle wrecked on Byers Creek Road at Red Farm Road.

The suspect ran from the scene on foot. The Towns County Sheriff’s Office deputies, along with Union County’s tracking K-9, and the Towns County drone were called to assist in the search for the suspect. Residents were immediately alerted through the Sheriff’s Office Facebook page.

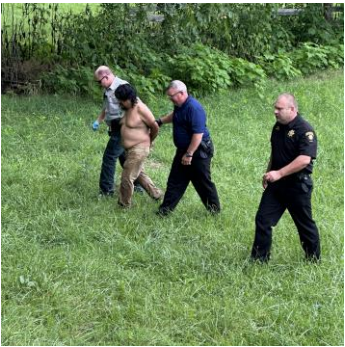
Towns County Sheriff Ken Henderson thanks the community for calling in locations of sightings for the suspect. A Towns County resident saw the subject running on his property and notified deputies on the scene as to the direction of travel.

Towns County Sheriff’s Office Captain, Johnny McCoy, observed the suspect crossing a field where he took the suspect into custody without incident.

Severo Escorza Tapia, age 51, Hayesville, was arrested by Georgia State Patrol and charged with:

- 2 counts Felony Fleeing or Attempting to Elude a Police Officer
- DUI – Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol
- Aggressive Driving
- Driving on Wrong Side of Road
- Driving without a Valid License
- Failure to Drive within Single Lane
- Failure to Stop for Stop Sign
- No Insurance
- Reckless Driving
- Speeding 35 MPH (56-99 miles over)

Tapia also has pending charges in Union County.



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

LAKE FOREST ESTATES HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION MEETING

Sheriff Ken Henderson was the guest speaker at the Lake Forest Estates Homeowners Association annual meeting on Saturday, speaking on the state of the Towns County Sheriff’s Office. The event was well attended with food for all.



MISSING PERSON

The Towns County Sheriff's Office, Towns County Fire Department and DNR is investigating a missing person case.

Steven Murphy, age 38 left his home in the True Love Mtn. Road area without his cell phone or wallet wearing only shorts and socks on Sunday August 27, 2023.

Tracking K-9's, a Georgia State Patrol Helicopter and a Towns County Sheriff's Office Drone Unit has been involved with the search. A foot search of the area has also been conducted with negative results. The area around Mr. Murphys* residence is steep and heavily wooded making it extremely difficult to search.

Mr. Murphy has some very serious health issues that require medication and needs to be located as soon as possible for him to be ok.

If anyone has seen or know the whereabouts of Mr. Murphy, please contact 911 or Towns County Sheriff's Office.



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARADE

The Towns County Sheriff's Office Christmas Parade will be kicking off the Christmas Season Saturday, December 2, 2023 @ 5:30 p.m.

This year's theme is "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town".

The parade route will begin in the parking lot of the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, with the lineup beginning at 4:00 p.m.

If you are planning to enter the float contest you will need to be lined up and fully decorated by 4:15 p.m. NO ENTRY FEE IS REQUIRED UNLESS YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE TO SHOP WITH THE SHERIFF.

*All parade entries must be well-lit.

*Children under the age of 18 must be supervised by an adult.

*We ask that no float have a Santa Claus on it because Santa Claus will be bringing up the rear of the parade and is the grand finale (more than one Santa will confuse the smaller kids).

Please call Towns County Sheriff's Office to let them know if you will be participating in the parade and your details or if you have any questions. 706-896-4444.



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

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