

The Badge



Towns County Sheriff's Office News



From the desk of Sheriff Ken Henderson:

As Winter makes way for Spring, we are again given a fresh outlook on renewing life. We at the Towns County Sheriff's Office are reminded that this season is a great time in our community. A new baseball season begins, spring break is approaching, and graduation is drawing near for our students. We enjoy celebrating these times in our community.

If our officers can help with traffic control or security monitoring at special events, please call us well in advance of a scheduled event, and we will, if at all possible, help provide coverage for your special events.

As you will see in this edition Towns County Sheriff's Office remains committed to our drug initiatives, making the largest Fentanyl bust in the history of Towns County just a few weeks ago.

Last week we discovered an illegal immigrant that was planning to distribute Methamphetamine into the community. This individual was turned over to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents for deportation. As we see daily in the news, our country is being overrun at our borders, and our office is committed to working with I.C.E. to ensure our community remains a safe place to call home.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call my office.

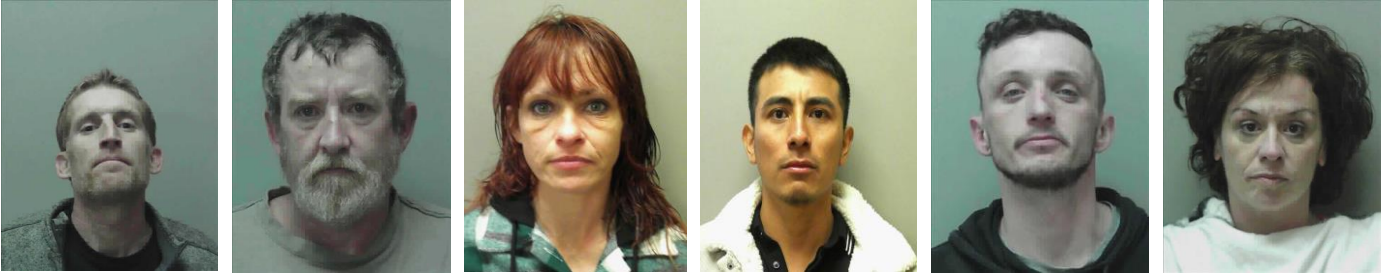
Our thoughts and prayers are with the Georgia Department of Public Safety and the family of Georgia State Patrol Trooper Chase Redner who was killed in the line of duty earlier this month.



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.

FEBRUARY DRUG ARRESTS:



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

FEBRUARY DRUG ARRESTS

Towns County Sheriff's Office and Clay County Sheriff's Office raided a residence on Byron Road.

Towns County & Clay County Sheriffs' Drug Investigators met and have been working together on drug information received which focused on a specific individual at a residence in Towns County.

Follow-up by investigators resulted in probable cause. Towns County Sheriff's Investigators secured a search warrant for a residence on Byron Road.

Towns County Investigators, assisted by Clay County, served the search warrant on Wednesday evening February 7.

2.7 grams of Fentanyl, which field tested positive, was confiscated. Fentanyl is the most dangerous drug in our community. It is 100 times stronger than Morphine.

Gregory Thomas Breitenbach, age 44, Young Harris was arrested and charged with:

- * Felony Possession of Fentanyl
- * Felony Possession of Fentanyl with Intent to Distribute
- * Possession and Use of Drug Related Objects

Towns County Sheriff Ken Henderson stated our war on drugs is continuing. Sheriff Henderson commends the hard work of Towns County Drug Investigators and Clay County Drug Investigators working together to get this dangerous drug out of our community.

Towns County Sheriff's Office meets regularly, and as needed, with our counterparts from Clay County Sheriff's Office to share information, keeping our joining communities safe.



FOLLOW UP INVESTIGATION :

Further investigation into a raid on a residence on Byron Road Wednesday evening February 7th, which resulted in the seizure of 2.7 grams of Fentanyl and the arrest of Gregory Thomas Breitenbach, resulted in a larger amount of Fentanyl being confiscated. Towns County Sheriff's Drug Investigators and K-9s were not satisfied with the results of the seizure and continued their investigation into the case by interviewing Breitenbach. After the interview, it was determined that Breitenbach had observed deputies entering the driveway and threw drugs out of the back window of the residence. Investigators returned to the residence and hit the jackpot, seizing a large 33-gram brick of pure Fentanyl (field tested positive), along with Heroin (field tested positive) along with a Schedule IV Controlled Substance (Xanax).

This is the largest amount of Fentanyl ever seized in Towns County.

It appears Breitenbach was in the process of breaking down the brick and packaging it into small baggies preparing for distribution into our community and surrounding areas.

Breitenbach has additionally been charged with:

- Felony Trafficking Fentanyl totaling 33 grams
- Felony Trafficking Heroin
- Felony Possession of Heroin
- Felony Possession with Intent to Distribute Schedule IV Controlled Substance
- Felony Possession of Schedule IV Controlled Substance

Fentanyl is 100 times more potent than morphine with as little as 2 milligrams being lethal. 33 Grams of fentanyl could kill the entire population of Towns County.

Sheriff Ken Henderson commends the commitment of our drug Investigators for follow up on this case to rid our community of this dangerous drug.

Keeping our community and children safe is and will always be Sheriff Henderson's number one priority.



On Monday morning, February 12th, Towns County Sheriff's Drug Investigators, Patrol Deputies and K-9 units were conducting concentrated patrols in known drug areas.

These patrols resulted in a traffic stop of a vehicle. Probable cause was developed, and a search of the vehicle resulted in a quantity of Methamphetamine, which field-tested positive, and Schedule IV controlled substance. All substances were confiscated, and two individuals were arrested.

Cristine Elise Stitchcomb, age 43, Andrews, NC is charged with:

- Felony Possession of Schedule IV Controlled Substance x 2

William Christopher Caseldine, age 44, Murphy NC is charged with:

- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine with Intent to Distribute
- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine
- Removed/Falsified I.D. of License Plate
- Possession of Drug Related Objects

Sheriff Ken Henderson is pleased that our deputies are working together and concentrating our resources to specific areas to control our drug problems and impact criminal activity. Concentrated patrols will continue.



ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT ARRESTED FOR DRUGS

On Sunday, February 25th Deputy Justin Osborn investigated a suspicious person at the Marathon Gas Station at 1883 Hwy. 76W.

He was able to locate the subject and during the investigation probable cause was established and the vehicle was searched.

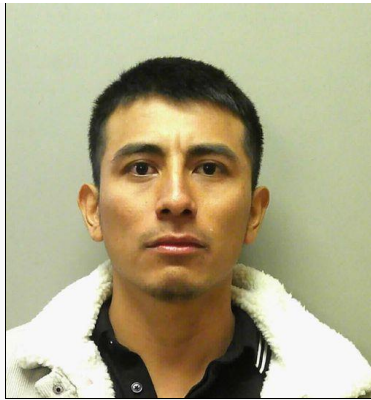
During the investigation an amount of Methamphetamine, that field-tested positive, was located.

Carmelo Cruz Lopez, age 28, Hiawassee was arrested and charged with:

- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine with Intent to Distribute
- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine

It was determined Lopez was an illegal immigrant. Bond was set at \$2,000 and Lopez was released to I.C.E. on February 26, 2024. Jail records reflect Lopez has been deported previously.

Sheriff Ken Henderson commends Deputy Osborn for his actions getting these illegal drugs off the streets and is pleased to have I.C.E. working with Towns County Sheriff's Office to remove those that are here illegally from our county.



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

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY VICKI

February 1st, Towns County Sheriff's Office celebrated Administrative Supervisor Vicki Ellis' 20th anniversary with the Office.

Sheriff Ken Henderson would like to commend Vicki for her continued dedication and exemplary service to our staff and our community.

Here's to 20 more Vicki!



SCHOOL SAFETY SWEEP

Towns County Sheriff's Office K-9 unit along with Towns County School Resource Officers and School Administrative Staff conducted a proactive school safety sweep of various classrooms.

Sheriff Ken Henderson is pleased to announce that no contraband was located and is proud of our students.

Keeping our school students safe is our first priority.



BODY CAMERAS IN THE DETENTION CENTER

The Towns County Sheriff's Office Detention Center has implemented body worn cameras for detention officers.

The most common reasons for implementing body cameras is to improve officer safety, improve training and supervision, and reduce agency liability.

Studies have shown that body cameras are very effective and deter individuals from making bad choices.

Sheriff Ken Henderson stated that body cameras offer more transparency. The detention center has stationary cameras throughout the facility. Body cameras document incidents and establish culpability and to discourage unwanted aggression.



Pictured: Detention Officer Eliel Escamilla and Detention Officer Isaiah Boykin.

SAFETY CHECK IN GUMLOG AREA

Thursday evening, February 8th, Towns County Sheriff's deputies, K-9s and drug investigators conducted a safety check in the Gumlog area.

Sheriff Henderson would like to assure citizens that the Towns County Sheriff's Office will continue our proactive approach to help ensure our roadways and community are safe. Safety checks will continue randomly throughout the county.



The Towns County Sheriff's Office received a donation yesterday from the Blairsville Seventh Day Adventist Church to help kids in our community during tragic situations. The goal of the bags are to take the child's mind off a tragic situation such as domestic abuse calls, car accidents, courts, etc. Each Deputy will carry these bags with them to help those in need.

The bags are filled with stuffed animals, coloring books, crayons, toothbrush and paste and a comb or brush.

Sheriff Ken Henderson would like to thank these wonderful ladies for working so hard to create these bags and donate them for us to hand out.



DEATH INVESTIGATION AT HIGH SHOALS FALLS

At 2:01 pm, Wednesday, February 21, 2024, Towns County Sheriff's Office received a call to High Shoals Falls for a person hanging from a tree by a rope.

Towns County Sheriff's Office asked the GBI for assistance with the investigation.

The investigation into the death reveals the victim's identity as Trevonte Jamal Shubert-Helton, age 29, of Sautee Nacoochee, GA.

Initial investigation indicates the death is an isolated incident. Shubert-Hilton will be taken to the GBI Medical Examiner's Office where an autopsy will be performed.

Sheriff Ken Henderson states that an investigation into the death of Mr. Shubert-Hilton will remain active and is continuing.

GEORGIA GOVERNORS OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY MEETING

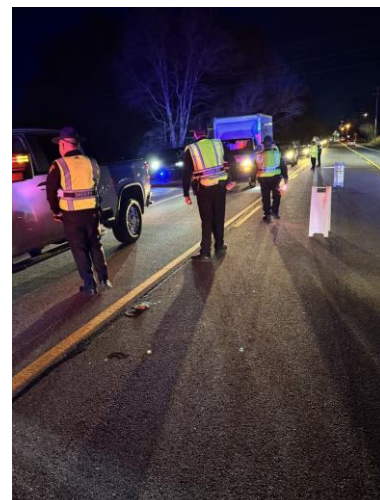
Sheriff Ken Henderson is a true believer in the importance of networking with other agencies and that it is a key element to keeping our communities safe and protected and last night he was honored to host the Georgia GOHS meeting with those agencies.

A little over 50 people were in attendance from the following agencies:

- Towns County Sheriff's Office, Georgia
- McCaysville Police Department
- Young Harris College Police Department
- Blairsville Police Department
- Canton Police Police Department
- Dawson County Sheriff's Office

Program Specialist April Martinez from Mothers Against Drunk Driving Georgia was on hand with an informative presentation.

In addition to the Georgia GOHS meeting a Safety Road Check was conducted along Hwy. 76. Sheriff Ken Henderson would like to emphasize that Safety Roads Checks are a proactive approach in keeping our community and roads safe and will continue in the future to have periodic checks throughout the community.



VFW POST 7807 & VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS LADIES AUXILIARY

Sheriff Ken Henderson and his staff would like to formally thank Mr. John J. Whalen from the VFW Auxiliary Post 7807-Hiawasse, GA and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Ladies Auxiliary member Renate Diebold who stopped by with a kind gift for the Towns County Sheriff's Office and were deeply honored for your kind words of appreciation to our deputies.



Sheriff's Law Enforcement Academy

Hosted by Sheriff Ken Henderson

Classes begin Tuesday April 9, 2024, and will be held
each Tuesday from 10 AM – Noon for 10 weeks.

You may apply in person at the Towns County Sheriff's
Office

4070 State Highway 339, Young Harris, GA

Applications are also available at
www.townscountysheriff.org

Application Deadline: Friday, March 22, 2024

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

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