

Towns County Herald

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Bradshaw gives updates on work crews, renovations

By Jeremy Foster
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, July 19, Towns County Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw held his regular monthly meeting at the courthouse to inform the public the latest on detainee crews for public works projects, courthouse renovation updates and budgetary expenditures.

Bradshaw kicked things off with a discussion about an agreement he signed with the Georgia Department of Corrections in a recent called meeting for the three-man detainee crew that we get from the Col-

well Detention Center.”
“We signed an agreement for \$147,954 for one year,” Bradshaw said. “But right now, COVID has broken out again over there, and we are not getting detainees on a regular basis, so that means we cannot always get them.”

Importantly, the agreement stipulates that the county only has to pay for crews it receives, so the amount due is ultimately prorated based on detainee availability each year.

“We have been getting one small crew of four men here and there, which does put a strain on getting grass cutting, weed eating, painting,

repairs and many things (done) because we have always relied on (the detainees),” Bradshaw said.

Continuing, “(Sheriff Ken Henderson) has let us have three to four guys from the local jail that we count on every day, so we are looking forward to getting the full-time crew back soon, because they do help save money.”

During his Commissioner’s Report, Bradshaw said he had good news to divulge on “the renovations and additions to the new courthouse.”

“We have been working with Reeves and Young and are getting very close to where

we need to be,” he said of the SPLOST-funded project, adding that the funding was, almost done at the temporary courthouse office lodgings in the Old Rec Gym that will be used during construction.

“An electrician has been down running all of the outlets for the cubicles and other different sections,” he said. “Now, (we’re) waiting for an IT person to start running the phone and computer lines.”

“I should have a timetable at the next county meeting on when we will be moving out (to make room for courthouse construction), but hopefully

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Cliff Bradshaw
Sole Commissioner

TCSO addresses roadside dispute with Hiawassee PD

Information Release
Towns County Sheriff’s Office

The Towns County Sheriff’s Office has received numerous complaints from citizens over the past several months about the Hiawassee Police Department stopping vehicles approximately one to two miles outside of their jurisdiction along Highway 76 West.

On Friday, July 29, Sheriff Ken Henderson noticed a vehicle stopped by the Hiawassee Police Department near the car wash on Highway 76 West, and decided to investigate the situation, which is within his authority to do so.

Sheriff Henderson waited until (Hiawassee Police) Sgt. Tracy James issued a citation to the driver in the stopped vehicle and then asked the driver where Sgt. James had turned on this blue light. The driver said that the blue lights were turned on just prior to the stop, approximately two miles outside the Hiawassee city limits.

The Sheriff then attempted to talk with Sgt. James, who began berating the Sheriff and threatened to arrest him. Sgt. James had no arrest powers to

do so, as he was outside his jurisdiction.

A heated argument between Sgt. James and Sheriff Henderson ensued and ended within about a minute. The Sheriff regrets that the argument escalated, and that profanity was exchanged. Subsequently, Sgt. James’ (body) camera video of the incident was released to news outlets and to social media, presumably by the Hiawassee Police Department or the Hiawassee City Government.

If the traffic offense occurred inside the City of Hiawassee, Sgt. James likely would have been justified in making the traffic stop outside his jurisdiction if he were engaged in “hot pursuit.”

“Hot pursuit” allows for the immediate and continuous pursuit by police officers of a fleeing suspect into neighboring jurisdictions where they have no power to enforce the law. Upon entering a neighboring jurisdiction, the officer engaged in “hot pursuit” must notify said jurisdiction that they are engaged in “hot pursuit.”

It appears that Sgt. James may have initiated an illegal



Ken Henderson
Towns County Sheriff

traffic stop because he was out of his jurisdiction, and it is unclear whether or not he was engaged in “hot pursuit.”

The County Attorney continues to investigate the legality of traffic stops being made by the Hiawassee Police Department outside the city limits and inside the Sheriff’s Office’s jurisdiction, and Sheriff Henderson has met with the Mayor and Chief of Police several times to share his concerns about the issue.

However, Sgt. James was engaged in pursuit of a fleeing

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Hiawassee Mayor responds to Sheriff’s Office statement

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales responded last week to a statement regarding the Hiawassee Police Department that was posted to the Towns County Sheriff’s Office Facebook page on Tuesday, July 19.

The statement – reprinted in its entirety next to this article in the newspaper – features the Sheriff’s Office addressing the June 24 incident that grabbed international headlines earlier this month after Sheriff Ken Henderson and Hiawassee Police Sgt. Tracy James got into a roadside quarrel over jurisdiction and threatened to arrest each other following a city traffic stop in the county.

Ordiales responded to the July 19 Sheriff’s Office statement in the comment section of the News Talk 95.1 WJRB Facebook page after the radio station posted a story in which she was unable to offer remarks due to the attempt to contact her coming too late at night.

In her Facebook comment, Ordiales said the Sheriff’s

Office was “totally inaccurate” in its description of “illegal traffic stops” being made by city police in the county’s jurisdiction.

“All of the stops that the City Police Department have made are in compliance with Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA), the state and federal Constitutions, and have been for offenses that have occurred within city limits,” Ordiales wrote.

Continuing, “The statement made on the official Towns County Sheriff’s Facebook page contains many inaccuracies that will be revealed in



Liz Ordiales
Hiawassee Mayor

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Video footage from Valero showing Hiawassee Police Sgt. Tracy James pulling out to initiate the now infamous June 24 traffic stop.
Photo/Screenshots

Moonshine Fest to serve up music and fun July 29-31

By Todd Forrester
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Nowhere in his wildest dreams could Blairsville’s own Country Music star Tommy Townsend have foreseen the success story that Granddaddy Mimm’s Distilling Co. would become when he founded the business in 2012.

Already an established Nashville musician at the time, Townsend began dabbling in spirits and moonshine as a hobby, a way to carry on the local tradition of his grandfather, the legendary moonshiner Jack “Mimm” McClure of Young



Tommy Townsend

Harris. Now, 10 years later, Townsend and Granddaddy Mimm’s are commanding Downtown Blairsville this weekend as they host the first-ever Mountain Music & Moonshine Festival July 29-31.

“I would have never

imagined hosting a festival of this magnitude 10 years ago,” Townsend said. “(The company) actually started as sort of a side-hustle business to honor my grandfather by producing a few cases here and there.

“Summing up (Granddaddy Mimm’s) past 10 years, all I can say is it just gets busier and busier. But it wouldn’t be as successful if it wasn’t for the amazing staff we have.”

Rain or shine, the three-day event will feature more than

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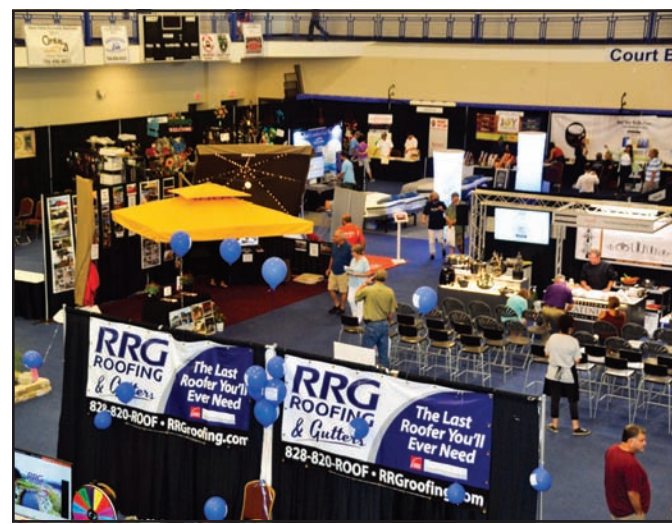
2022 Home & Garden Show promotes area businesses

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – A home is often a great sense of pride for its owner. Maybe the kitchen boasts perfectly polished granite floors, or that wrap-around porch offers endless opportunities for fun-filled gatherings. Additionally, a life can be spiced up by changing a house – or its exterior – around just a bit.

Landscaping can make a yard seem larger or smaller, and there’s something to consider when thinking about the ease of access that comes with never having to climb on the roof to clean out gutters.

Vendors offered solutions and services for all that and more at the Annual Northeast Georgia and Western North Carolina Home & Garden Show, now in its ninth



The annual Home & Garden Show at the Towns County Rec Center brought in plenty of people to support the local economy over the weekend.
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

year, at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center July 23-24.

In the words of Event Organizer Julie Sakal, the Home

& Garden Show is a “one-stop shop,” worth a look not only for new homeowners but those whose homes may be in need

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‘Acoustic Sunsets’ concert series to conclude Thursday, July 28

By Jeremy Foster
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Rising right alongside the heat this summer has been the number of great events for families and friends to enjoy inside the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, most recently with the “Acoustic Sunsets” concert series at the gorgeous outdoor stage and venue of the Hamilton Gardens.

Already this year, folks have enjoyed many events at the fairgrounds, from the rodeo to festivals, live music and other attractions amid great weather and beautiful mountain views.

The “Acoustic Sunsets” series debuted on Thursday, June 30, and has run each, with just one more outing featuring Americana Country band Surrender Hill this Thursday, July 28.

Food trucks and art vendors have been available throughout each evening starting at 6 p.m., with live music beginning at 7 p.m.

For the July 14 concert, the Blue Ridge-based Robbie Litt Band wowed crowds with the soulful sounds of good ol’ classic Southern Rock and covers of Led Zeppelin, Neil Young, Lynyrd Skynyrd, The

Allman Brothers, Bob Seger and more, plus original songs.

Catherine Luckenbach is the co-curator of the Hamilton Gardens, and before the event began earlier this month, she offered her thoughts on the new series’ debut and how it has been going.

“So far, this idea has been a hit,” Luckenbach said. “Each event, we continue to see the numbers grow, and more people are coming here.”

“You can’t be beat here, and I think that is just one reason among many that more people are wanting to come here and gather, because we are really starting to take

advantage of our location.”
“I just want to give back to the community, and this has been a great way for all of us to enjoy it together.”

Area musician Wyatt Espalin was lead coordinator for booking the music for the series. He headlined the inaugural event on June 30 and kicked off the live music action July 14, saying afterwards that “the community support for this has been amazing.”

“We wanted to spotlight the local musicians around here,” Espalin said. “They are so talented, and while mostly they do cover songs of

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Robbie Litt headlined the July 14 “Acoustic Sunsets” concert series, which will return for one last show of the summer with a performance by Surrender Hill this Thursday, July 28, at Hamilton Gardens.
Photo by Jeremy Foster

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Home & Garden Show...from Page 1A

of a bit of a touchup, too. "Whether you want your roof repaired, you need electrical (service), you need porch furniture, you need your garage floor done — it's a one-stop shop," Sakal said.

Some of the most popular vendor set-ups at the show were demonstrations for gutter covers, like Gutter Gard South and HomeCraft Gutter Protection, the latter of which offers military-grade stainless steel protection to keep out gunk like leaves and even pollen.

That being said, a house cannot truly be a home if the people inside aren't well cared for, and there were several options to help with the upkeep of the human body.

Joy Filled Foods and The Natural Balance Power Bracelet, which offered healthy, flavorful snacks and therapeutic magnetic bracelets, respectively, were just two of a handful of companies that catered to health and beauty.

The sheer scope of vendors was impressive. The variety of services and products avail-

able was one thing, but when it came to the presence of small businesses, it was interesting to note that some of the companies in attendance built themselves from the ground up.

"(The Senior Expo Management) runs this show, and they're very good people to work with. They asked us to come," said Karen Pattillo, who added that she "loved the town" and didn't mind the three-hour drive from South Carolina to sell garden and home décor for her business called Family Affairs.

Pattillo said her business came out of a love of basic arts and crafts, and over the span of three decades, Pattillo's hobby became more professional. At local Home Shows specifically, she benefits from many repeat customers and appreciates the more laid-back attitudes of the folks in Towns County as compared to many of the other "fine art" shows in which she has participated.

On the patron side, Carol Singleterry and her husband drove up from Valdosta for a

training class, and while in the area, they noticed an advertisement for the Home & Garden Show.

Although they'd just arrived at the event, Singleterry said she could certainly see why such an extravaganza would be a great hit among the public and provide excellent opportunities for the community due to the wide variety of vendors present.

By contrast, local residents Keith and Patty Stivenson had already made a couple of rounds from vendor to vendor when the Towns County Herald caught up with them on Saturday.

"I love the Home & Garden Shows," said Patty. "We used to go to them all the time in Pittsburgh; they had a big one there in Pennsylvania."

The Young Harris show was the first the couple had been to in Georgia since moving, and they had already found their experience satisfactory. In particular, they picked up a box of Plant Nanny watering stakes, which are designed to keep indoor plants hydrated with a small but

steady amount of water from a bottle screwed in from the top.

"I love them," Patty said, pulling the charmingly wee terra-cotta funnels from their box. "There's so many unique things (at the show)."

The group that sponsored the Home & Garden Show, Senior Expo, has been around for 34 years.

"It was founded down in Fort Meyers, Florida. The owner decided he had enough of Florida, (and) like the Beverly Hillbillies, packed up and never went back," Sakal said, offering some background on how the business behind the regional show came to be located in this area.

Based in Andrews, North Carolina, Senior Expo Management continues to hold Home Shows in the Southeastern United States in places like Knoxville, Tennessee; Spartanburg, South Carolina; Jacksonville, Florida; and, of course, Young Harris and Blairsville in North Georgia.

"What we try to achieve is to have reputable exhibitors that are here," Sakal said. "That's one of the biggest things that we do look at.

"We don't just have anybody in the show. We try to get reputable people who will come back and do the job ... and the

best thing is, most of them give show deals, which are cheaper than what you can get at their actual location."

Due to recent economic hardships, many of the vendors and businesses at the show were recovering from a loss of income, fewer employees, and delays in supply delivery.

Getting a "branding opportunity" at the Home & Garden Show allows smaller companies to get their names out there and attract more customers, which in turn means more revenue and support.

"(Organizing this) is

probably one of the best jobs I've ever had," Sakal said. "Being able to get them back into business, get them back where they're making money every week doing different shows, means a lot ... Knowing they're able to pull themselves out and not have to go under is a good feeling."

For more information on the ever-popular Home & Garden Shows in North Georgia and Western North Carolina, including a schedule of next year's shows in both Blairsville and Young Harris, visit <https://expo-managementinc.com/>.



Event Organizer and Senior Expo Employee Julie Sakal at the 2022 Home & Garden Show. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks



At the Home & Garden Show, Towns County Firewise Citizens Coalition volunteers handed out useful information for homeowners to make their properties safer from wildfire. Photo by Lowell Nicholson



The annual Home Show always offers a buffet of home improvement options, so if you missed it in 2022, rest assured that the event will return this time next year. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Moonshine Fest...from Page 1A

70 artists and vendors, along with a headlining concert Saturday night by Country Music singer-songwriter Keith Anderson, and of course, Townsend will also be performing.

Friday's activities will begin at 3 p.m. and include the Moonshine Market at the Seasons Inn Plaza, featuring games and flea-market style shopping. The Festival Kick-Off event begins at 7 p.m. Friday with live music on the town square.

The free Passport Drink Tour is scheduled for Friday and Saturday on the square. Passports are available at Granddaddy Mimm's and Seasons Inn, and full passports can be redeemed for a free drink at Granddaddy Mimm's, a short stroll from the square, on Saturday night for 21-and-ups.

A "best moonshiner" costume contest will be held Saturday, with one male and one female crowned the winner. Additional Saturday activities include ax throwing on the square and a car show at the Seasons Inn Plaza from 11

a.m. to 3 p.m.

Guests may also tour the Granddaddy Mimm's Distillery all three days — tours cost \$5 and get underway at the top of every hour — and live music will continue Sunday, July 31, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"We encourage everyone to come out, bring a lawn chair and support Downtown Blairsville," Townsend said. "We would like to thank the businesses for their sponsorships, and the Union County Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Development Authority and the Union County Historical Society for all their hard work."

Darren Harper of the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority touched on the teamwork aspect, discussing what is required to host an event of this magnitude. And despite the heavy lifting behind the scenes, Harper believes guests will be pleased with the end result.

"This is one of those times where we have multiple organizations working together

to promote the area," he said.

"Individually, we couldn't have pulled this off. We had to have a 'it takes a village' approach for something of this size.

"But we think this festival is going to have a little something for everybody, so there is a good reason to come downtown this weekend."

Additional musical acts include The Bone Daddy's Band, Heart of Pine, Tommy Townsend, Rick Davenport and the Boys.

As for the headliner, Anderson has produced three Billboard Top-10 songs and has co-written hits for Garth Brooks, George Jones and Big & Rich. The latter resulted in the 2007 No. 1 country hit, "Lost in this Moment."

Tickets for the Saturday night concert at Granddaddy Mimm's are \$25, and admission to the rest of the festival events is free.

For additional festival info and tickets, visit granddaddydimm.com and visitdowntownblairsville.com.

Mayor's Response...from Page 1A

due time. This incident is still under investigation by several state agencies, and we are not at liberty to discuss details at this time.

"Other than the events of Memorial Day weekend (about which the statement is factually inaccurate on almost every point and in which the Hiwassee officer did nothing wrong), the Hiwassee Police Department has received no complaints or allegations of unlawful traffic stops by its officers. Any complaints are duly investigated."

When reached for comment by the Towns County Herald, Ordiales said there was no doubt in her mind that the stop was properly initiated, despite TCSSO's suggestion that James "may have initiated an illegal traffic stop because he was out of his jurisdiction, and it is unclear whether or not he was engaged in 'hot pursuit.'" As one piece of evi-

dence that the stop was legally conducted, Ordiales pointed to security footage from the Vale-ro gas station just inside city limits that shows James pulling out to initiate the June 24 traffic stop that resulted in the public confrontation between the two agencies.

The grainy nature of the gas station footage viewed by the Herald, which is a cell-phone recording of the original, makes it hard but not impossible to discern the emergency lights of James' police vehicle as it waits to pull out from the exit of the neighboring NAPA Auto Parts.

But what is clear is that a driver who just turned right out of the gas station toward town stopped in the roadway after seeing Sgt. James attempting to depart from the adjacent exit, allowing the officer to proceed west onto US 76 in pursuit of a motorist clocked

speeding inside city limits. At press time Monday, Ordiales was planning to show the video footage in the July 25 work session of the Hiwassee City Council in an attempt to "just present the facts."

A resolution between the agencies remained elusive as of last week, and Ordiales said she and Hiwassee Police Chief Paul Smith had yet to have any contact with Sheriff Henderson regarding the incident, though she added that the city is "open to discussions."

"The top priority for the city as well as the county is to provide public safety," Ordiales said.

As previously reported, both the Sheriff's Office and Hiwassee PD have turned the incident over to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, but it is unclear currently what may come out of the state agency's involvement.

County Update...from Page 1A

planning on moving at the latest in the first week of October."

Next, the commissioner talked more about what's been going on at county transfer station with the recently separated areas for residential bagged garbage and commercial hauling.

"I have had several phone calls from people saying they are enjoying it very much and it runs a lot smoother and cleaner now," he said.

In terms of county finances, Bradshaw said that "everything is going good ... other than we are seeing a lot of inflation and we are dealing with just like you are in your home."

"But as far as numbers, revenue is coming in, sales tax and everything is still on target, and we are doing very well," he said.

Bradshaw then discussed an agreement signing with Legacy Link, which operates the Senior Center in town.

"They get state and federal funds to run that, but the

county must give funds as well," he said. "We are going to be giving \$123,527 to help run it, and that is an increase. We have been at the same rate for many, many years, but this price is including the increase of about \$11,205."

Moving on, Bradshaw turned to an agreement signing with the Georgia Public Defender Council regarding the Enotah Judicial Circuit.

"We have to do this every year, and here is what each county has to pay out based on population," Bradshaw said. "Towns County is 12.6%, Lumpkin County is 33.9%, Union County is 24.9% and White County is 28.4%. So, \$55,328 is what our county pays for that."

The commissioner then signed a renewal agreement with the University of Georgia Board of Regents for the County Extension Office.

"We pay the university back \$12,456 for our two employees," he said.

In other business, Brad-

shaw discussed a bid for a new ambulance box to assist the Towns County EMS.

"Every year or sometimes every other year, we have to buy a new ambulance to rotate them in because they get a lot of miles and wear and tear quick," he said. "We started a program where the ambulance box that you put on the cabin chassis has a quick disconnect on it where we can remove it and use it five to seven times on different chassis in the future."

"In the long haul (this) saves a lot of money, and it is very high quality. So far, we have one bid from Frazer for \$160,243, so we are going to go ahead and accept that bid, because with the computer chip it can take up to a year to get a new vehicle."

After a brief Q&A session, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled and open for all the public to attend on Tuesday, Aug. 16, typically the third Tuesday of every month.

'Operation Sting' makes real impact on local drug crime

New Special Towns County Herald

Since the Towns County Sheriff's Office initiated "Operation Sting" on Jan. 1, 2022, 40 individuals have been arrested for felony trafficking, dealing, possession of methamphetamine, fentanyl and other dangerous drugs.

In the first six months of 2022, the Sheriff's Office had the largest number of arrests for drugs in county history, with a grand total of 157 substance-related charges for these individuals.

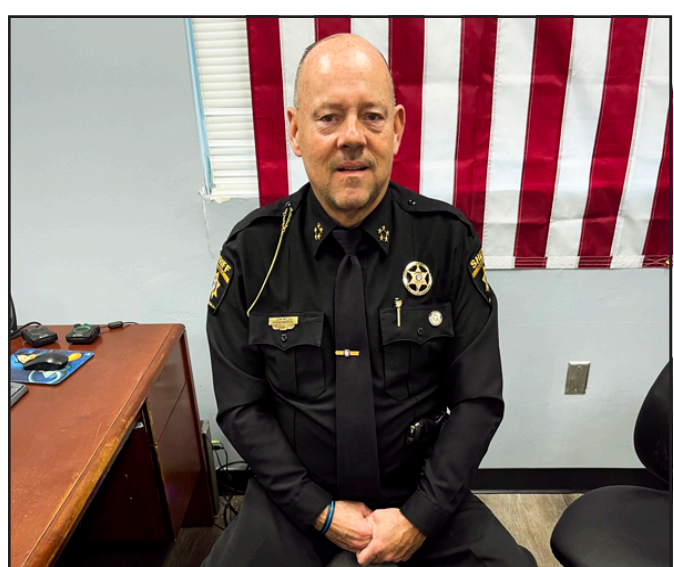
The importance of such interventions became all the more apparent when Sheriff Ken Henderson and his Command Staff met with Towns County Coroner Tamela Cooper recently to discuss drug overdoses.

There have been two confirmed overdose cases already this year, and according to toxicology reports by the Georgia Crime Lab, methamphetamine laced with fentanyl along with other drugs in the victims' systems were the causes for these deaths.

"These users are not getting what they think they're getting," Coroner Cooper said.

Sheriff Henderson has stated more than once that these dangerous drugs are a cocktail for death and affect everything from families' lives to mental health, crimes, jail population and overdoses.

After careful analysis, the sheriff hopes these arrests, which have included large amounts of methamphetamine laced with fentanyl, cocaine and other dangerous drugs that were targeted for sale in Towns County, will impact the number of overdoses in the future and save lives.



Towns County Sheriff Ken Henderson with drugs and cash confiscated by his department this year. Photo/Facebook



Drugs that were meant for sale here in Towns County. Photo/Facebook

LEO Dispute...from Page 1A

suspect recently. On Friday, May 27th, 2022, the beginning of the Memorial Day weekend, Sgt. James was involved in a high-speed chase outside of his jurisdiction.

According to an Incident and Arrest Report, written by and filed by Sgt. James, and obtained by the Towns County Sheriff's Office, Sgt. James made a traffic stop near Highway 288 and Highway 76 West after he observed the driver not wearing a seat belt and behaving oddly.

Sgt. James made his observations of the driver while the driver was in the City of Hiwassee. After initially stopping, the driver decided to flee, and Sgt. James engaged the driver in a high-speed chase in the Towns County Sheriff's Office's jurisdiction.

The Report describes a dangerous high-speed chase with speeds reaching in excess of 110 miles per hour in the very congested area on Highway 76 West between the

Sandbar and Marina Station, with cars being forced onto the wrong side of the road and off the road to avoid the chase.

The chase continued through heavy holiday traffic, several miles through Towns County, at speeds described by Sgt. James in the Report, reaching 130 miles per hour. The chase ended when the suspect crashed and was arrested by Sgt. James miles outside his jurisdiction.

The Sheriff and his staff began receiving complaints from the public about the dangerous pursuit by law enforcement taking place, mistakenly thinking that Sheriff's Office vehicles were in pursuit.

A supervisor with the Sheriff's Office ordered deputies not to engage in the pursuit because to do so would be in violation of Sheriff's Office standard operating and procedures policy which prohibits the high-speed pursuit of motorists for minor traffic offenses, such as seat belt violations.

The Sheriff's Office recognizes how dangerous high-speed pursuits are to motorists and pedestrians, and Sheriff Henderson's No. 1 priority is keeping the citizens of Towns County safe.

On June 30th, 2022, a driver fleeing from deputies in Coweta County struck and killed a woman who was sleeping inside her home. According to Fox 5 Atlanta, a chase started when a deputy noticed a vehicle that failed to dim its headlights. When the deputy tried to pull the car over, the car sped off, reaching speeds of over 130 miles per hour. The driver lost control and drove straight into a home, killing the woman.

This is a prime example of why the Towns County Sheriff's Office does not engage in high-speed chases. They are extremely dangerous. The high-speed chase that Sgt. James recently initiated was both reckless and unjustified, and it put many people's safety in jeopardy. Fortunately, though, no one was injured or killed.

Lake Chatuge Rotary Club July 19, 2022 meeting



The Rotary Club of Lake Chatuge welcomed District Governor Gerry Taylor to their weekly meeting at Brasstown Valley Resort on Tuesday, July 19th.

Taylor leads Rotary District 6910, a total of 71 Rotary Clubs in northern Georgia. Taylor, a member of the Classic City Rotary Club in Athens, began his presentation by inducting and welcoming new Lake Chatuge Rotary member Terry Parker. This was the eighth new member of the club over the last year.

The District Governor went on to discuss the time he has spent with the new Rotary International President, Jennifer Jones, from Canada, Rotary International's first female President. He told the story about the first meeting of Ms. Jones' club in Windsor, Ontario, after the 9/11 attack on New York City, when the entire group of Canadian Rotarians stood and sang The Star Spangled Banner.

Taylor then outlined his goals and objectives for District 6910 during his leadership year. Among these goals were to surpass this year's record District 6910 contributions to the Rotary Foundation, Rotary International's nonprofit entity, which has now spent over \$4 billion dollars on projects around the world to improve health, alleviate poverty, provide quality education, and protect the environment. The

Foundation Polio Plus vaccination initiative has contributed to a significant decline in polio cases since its inception, from 350,000 worldwide at its inception to only 13 total cases in the world so far in 2022.

A second goal is to strengthen support for the Georgia Rotary Student Program. GRSP once more this year is sponsoring more than 40 college exchange students from countries around the world for a year's studies at various Georgia Universities. Locally, a GRSP student from Poland, Marton Boda, will be attending Young Harris College in the fall.

A third goal for the district is to see a 5% increase in Rotary membership for the district as a whole. Taylor complimented the club on significantly exceeding this rate of growth for the past year.

Finally, Taylor asked

for strong club attendance at the District Conference, this year taking place in Chattanooga, TN in late April 2023, at the new downtown Westin Hotel. A dinner train ride will be one highlight of the meeting, along with a host of great speakers.

After the meeting, Lake Chatuge Rotary President David Tinsley and President-elect Debra Lowe took DG Gerry on a tour of the club's signature hydroponic garden project, which delivers fresh green vegetables to local food banks weekly.

Lake Chatuge Rotary is one of more than 36,000 Rotary Clubs in more than 170 countries around the world, all dedicated to the Rotary Motto of "Service Above Self."

We welcome guests at our weekly Tuesday noon lunch meeting at the Brasstown Valley Resort. TJuly27.A6JH



Lake Chatuge Rotary President David Tinsley welcomes District Governor Gerry Taylor

Iota Iota a chapter of Beta Sigma Phi July events

Iota Iota a chapter of Beta Sigma Phi meet on July 9th at Branran Lodge to discuss the hosting of the Northeast Georgia Christmas luncheon to be held on December 10th at Brasstown Valley Resort. Members discussed logistics and individuals were assigned jobs. Jeanee McJilton informed the group that 64 chapters were sent a "save the date" flyer either by email or mail.

Then on July 21st the monthly meeting was held at the Civic Center. President Robin Zimmerman called the meeting to order and led the members in the Opening Ritual and Pledge of Allegiance. Helen Teboe and Denise Long provided a delicious summer meal that was enjoyed during the program Joan Anderson presented on pinecone baskets. Hostesses gifts were won by Joan Anderson, Robin Zimmerman, Denise Long and Helen Teboe.

Paula Meyers informed the chapter that are next service project will be the Back 2 School Backpack on August 6th at the First United Methodist Church of Union County. Everyone is to meet in the church parking lot at 9:45 AM and are to wear their yellow shirts.

Friday, July 22nd found several members meeting at Jeanee McJilton's house for a taco luncheon and craft. Carol Davis demonstrated to the group how to do an acrylic pour. Each member then filled cups with acrylic paints and poured it over the vase they brought which sat on top of a canvas. After completing the vase, members tilted the canvas that the paint had dripped on to make a beautiful abstract piece. Everyone's vase and canvas were uniquely beautiful. All agreed they'd like to do it again.

On July 11th at the Farmers Market Joan Anderson and Robin Zimmer were seen



Joan, Helen, Robin, Denise hostess winners



Jeanee and Kathy selling tickets for Iota Iota's fundraiser. Then on July 23rd, Kathy Ross and Jeanee McJilton were seen selling more tickets for the chance drawing that is to be held September 1st. The chapter has two giant baskets one filled with everything sunflower, and another filled with a travel case and other items that go along with travel. In addition to the baskets a local artist from Jaimoe Knives donated a beautiful knife valued at \$200. The tickets are \$5 each. If you are interested in getting tickets contact Kathy Ross at kfeross3@gmail.com.

The proceeds from this chance drawing will be going back into the community. In the past Iota Iota has supported Family Connections, 4-H, Scholarships for Union County High Schoolers, Healing Hands, Coat give away held at Antioch Church and Meals on Wheels to name a few.

Iota Iota's next meeting will be August 18th at the Haralson Memorial Civic Center at 5:30 PM. If you would like to find out more about Iota Iota chapter contact Helen Teboe the Vice President at hteboe@email.com. NTJuly27.22JCA

Acoustic Sunsets...from Page 1A

the greats, they have a good amount of original music, so there is no better way to promote local talent than this concert series.”

One of the talents being promoted with the concert series is 18-year-old Hiawassee artist True Youngblood, who played second that Thursday evening. The recent high school graduate will be attending Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee, this fall to pursue a career in music.

“One of the things I enjoy most about playing here is the view,” Youngblood said. “I like this smaller setting and intimate feeling as well, because the people here really get into the music while being out here in the beautiful weather, and I am very grateful for everyone’s support.”

People interested in following Youngblood’s musical journey can check out his TikTok @offbrandelvis.

Before the marquee event of Robbie Litt (guitar and vocals) and wife Ruthanne (bass and vocals), the Canada-born musician touched on his love of performing and his gratitude for having become an American

nearly three years ago.

Robbie is originally from Ontario, and he lived in Jacksonville, Florida, for about eight years before settling in nearby Blue Ridge.

“We love coming here because the crowd is always awesome and full of energy, and the scenery here is to die for, especially when the summer weather is great outside,” Robbie said. “My dad was a musician and had a music room, so it was inevitable that at an early age I always just gravitated towards music and any instrument I saw laying around the house or heard noises come from.

“We have been really blessed with a lot of support from Georgia on our original music, and we want to say thank you very graciously to everyone in this great area.”

People are encouraged to visit www.robbielitt.com or search YouTube and especially Spotify for free music, and to keep up with the band’s musical adventures and find out where to see them live next.

Local food vendor Coty Prine ran the Nickey’s Tasty Tacos truck during the concert,

and while the lines stayed busy all night, Prine took a few moments to reflect on the great moments he has been having at the Hamilton Gardens events.

“Tonight was my third consecutive acoustic series to attend as a vendor and as a live music lover in general, so I really got the best of both worlds,” Prine said. “I stay in Blue Ridge, but I love coming to the Hiawassee mountains whenever I have the chance – the view is just incredible. The people love our tacos, and everyone is just so great and friendly here.”

Mark Miller performed during last week’s concert on Thursday, July 21, and, as mentioned above, Surrender Hill will headline the final concert of the “Acoustic Sunsets” season this Thursday.

These are rain or shine events with free admission, so bring a chair and a blanket and enjoy a night full of music, food and fun at Hamilton Gardens in the lead-up to the big Georgia Mountain Fair headed this way Aug. 19-27.

For more information, visit www.georgiamountain-fairgrounds.com.



Aptly named, the “Acoustic Sunsets” concerts provide fun evening entertainment at the Hamilton Gardens over several Thursdays at the beginning of each summer.

Photo by Jeremy Foster

Blairsville Cruisers Car Show Saturday, July 30th



A special Cruise-In Saturday, July 30th by the Blairsville Cruisers will be held from 11 AM - 3 PM in the Season’s Inn Parking Lot on the Square. It’s part of the Granddaddy Mimm’s Mountain Music & Moonshine Festival this weekend in downtown Blairsville. All classic vehicles are welcome to participate. You need not be a club member to participate in this event.

The Blairsville Cruisers raffle car tickets will be available all weekend at the festival. The Raffle car will on display and tickets available Friday through Sunday. Come and see the beautiful 1999 Camaro convertible that you could win and help support local needy children. Ticket sales will be Friday from 1-7 PM and Saturday & Sunday from 9 AM - 5 PM.

All proceeds from donation ticket sales go to the



Raffle Car: 1999 Camaro Convertible

Blairsville Cruisers charity funds. These funds are used to support the needy Children’s Christmas programs which include Shop with a Cruiser, Shop with a Cop, Shop with a Hero and other programs helping needy children and their families throughout the year. Funds also go toward the club scholarship program for technical and trade school assistance to qualified students. The club also helps those in need in the community in many other ways.

Veterans in need are helped by the Cruisers from

funds raised at the annual “Salute to Veterans Car Show” held the first Saturday in November. Local Veteran organizations who participate receive donations from this event as well as individual veterans who may need a helping hand. Many Cruisers members are veterans. Plan to attend the veterans event November 5th at the Union County Farmers Market.

The Blairsville Cruisers is an all volunteer 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to our hobby and to helping the community, especially the children.