

County Meeting...from Page 1A

what it is," Bradshaw said. "We are trying to do the very best we can for the citizens."

Back in July, Bradshaw purchased a new emergency computer-aided dispatch system from Caliber Public Safety for \$212,726.

CAD systems aid 911 dispatchers by allowing them to efficiently organize and deliver a tremendous amount of information regarding emergency calls and dispatched units.

The new 911 CAD system is an upgraded version of the same system the county currently operates, and Roberts explained at the time how the newly upgraded system will work more efficiently but have

to be updated every five to seven years.

With ever-evolving technology, Roberts said the five-year window holds true for the phone system, too, and the lease will allow the county to upgrade the system in the relatively near term if need be.

The county is hoping to bring the new CAD and phone systems online at the same time around the beginning of April 2020, with equipment and wiring installation being phased in over the next few months.

Also during the Nov. 6 called meeting, Bradshaw renewed a Georgia Forestry Commission contract to enable

seamless cooperation with the state in the event of wildland fire.

According to Fire Chief Harold Copeland, the Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement between the county and Georgia Forestry is a much-needed safety precaution against wildfire, wherein the state will assist the county with fire suppression efforts if needed.

Towns County has had its fair share of wildland fires over the years, Copeland said, adding that, with a large number of county residents living in forested areas, it's important for the county to stay proactive and renew its agreement with Georgia Forestry each year.

Food Pantry...from Page 1A

Each week, the Food Pantry welcomes a wide range of financially struggling people who come in for meals.

"You have people who will pull up in nice cars, and people pushing their cars through, so it varies," Thomas said. "It's kind of hard to pinpoint who is actually the need and who is actually the greed."

"It's impossible, because the mission of this food pantry is to feed whoever comes through our doors, regardless of what they appear to be."

Thomas and the volunteers at the Food Pantry try to give people a variety of meals each week rather than just apportioning snacks and other such foods.

"When I fill these boxes, I like to try and give these people a couple or three complete meals, instead of just a bag of chips or a can of potatoes or whatever," Thomas said. "I like to give them the meat, the bread, the starch and meals."

"That can become a little bit hectic, because the only way you can accomplish that sometimes is by going out to Ingles or Walmart or ordering from a food distributor to get some items. The one place that we order from doesn't always have what we want, and it's repetitious on what we can order."

"We want to give people variety and not give them three of the same meal a week. There's no way for us to know

what people like, either, so these boxes aren't made specifically for anybody. We give them what we have, and we always give them a meal."

The Towns County Food Pantry could always use donations from the public to help supply food for local people in need, and Thomas said donation levels are usually OK.

"We have enough to keep us floating," Thomas said. "I don't want to throw out that it's not a problem, though, because it does become a problem when people aren't donating regularly like they do around the holidays or at the beginning of the year. We always welcome and appreciate donations."

Habitat for Humanity Towns Union Counties, Inc. celebrate Grand Opening of new offices and ReStore®



Habitat for Humanity Towns Union Counties, Inc. will celebrate the Grand Opening of its new offices and ReStore® on Monday, November 18, 2019, from 11 AM to 2 PM. The new building is located at 225 Wellborn Street in Blairsville, directly in front of the newly opened Skillet Café.

The celebration will include a small program, tours of the building, discussion of our mission and interaction with Habitat's staff and Board of Directors. Grilled hot dogs and soft drinks will be provided, while they last.

For more information



Habitat for Humanity volunteers have been busily preparing the new ReStore for its grand opening at the new location in Blairsville. please contact Bryan Thomas, Executive Director at 828-243-1206. NT(Nov13.222)CA

Crash...from Page 1A

they made their way north in the Fire Department's 2018 Ford Expedition known as FR-1, with lights and sirens activated, according to GSP.

Bruce was traveling south at the time in his 2006 Chevy Impala when he quickly braked and swerved around another southbound vehicle that was pulling over to allow FR-1 safe passage, according to GSP.

The Impala crossed into the northbound lane of Murphy Highway heading directly for FR-1, which in turn slowed down and attempted to exit the right shoulder to avoid the collision, according to GSP.

A guardrail prevented FR-1 from moving off the road, and the two vehicles crashed into one another right at the

white line in the northbound lane, resulting in an accident that was "unavoidable" by FR-1, according to GSP.

Both vehicles were totaled, and GSP said following too closely coupled with suspected distraction or inattention to the roadway on Bruce's behalf likely contributed to the accident.

The firefighters were taken to Union General Hospital for treatment and were released later that evening, though they had not been medically cleared to return to work by press time Monday.

Bruce was transported via medical helicopter to Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where he was still being treated for multiple broken bones at press time.

His wife Dawn reported shortly after the accident that her husband was "lucky to be alive," and that, fortunately, Bruce had not suffered brain damage or internal injuries.

She also spoke of a series of upcoming surgeries required to fix his broken arms and legs, saying he was "expected to be in hospital for a couple weeks and then has to go to rehab."

Responding to the accident involving two of his career firefighters from Station 1, Fire Chief David Dyer said at the time that he was thankful no lives were lost.

"Our thoughts and prayers go out to all involved. We wish them a speedy recovery," Dyer said.



The Union County Fire Department's 2018 Ford Expedition was totaled in the Nov. 1 crash. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Drug Arrests...from Page 1A

without incident.

Byrd was charged with possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute, possession of drug-related objects, vehicle window tint violation, and vehicle tag obstruction.

On Wednesday, Nov. 6, a deputy stopped a black BMW passenger car on US 76 in Hiwassee, resulting in the arrest of the driver, Benjamin Jason Rayburn, 44, of Murphy, North Carolina.

Rayburn was charged with possession of heroin,

possession of drug-related objects, driving on a suspended license, failure to maintain lane, and impeding the flow of traffic.

On Thursday, Nov. 7, Sheriff's Office investigators and deputies obtained and executed a search warrant at a residence on Ford Circle in Young Harris.

Upon completion of the search, deputies arrested Chelsey Joy Brock, 25, of Hayesville, North Carolina, without incident. She was charged with possession of methamphetamine and

possession of drug-related objects.

The Towns County Sheriff's Office has pledged to continue its strong pursuit of drug suspects in the community, saying additional arrests will be forthcoming.

All the cases are still active and ongoing. They will be forwarded to the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office for prosecution. All suspects are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Thefts...from Page 1A

side of the mall, and video surveillance equipment captured the burglar in the act of stealing, though he was wearing a mask when he committed the crime, Barrett said.

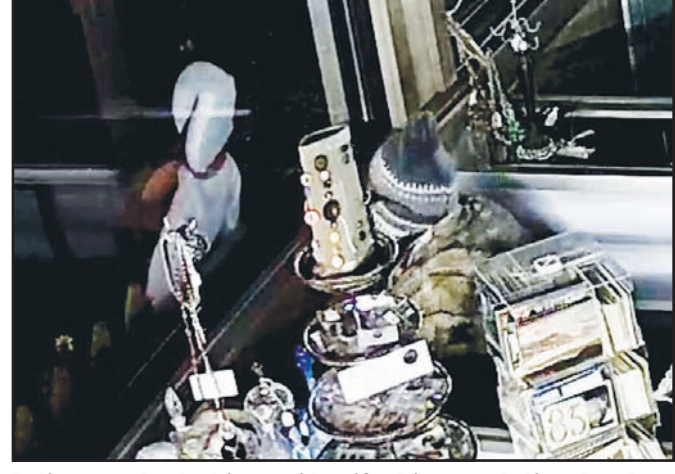
Also evident in the video, the suspect appeared to have disabled an exterior light about 10 minutes prior to making entry into the mall, giving Barrett cause to believe the suspect had studied the scene ahead of time.

The second theft last week at the Hiwassee Antique Mall occurred on Thursday, Nov. 7, Barret said, with video footage clearly capturing a larger-framed black male shoplifting jewelry from the store.

"At roughly 2:30 p.m., he entered and stayed in there for about 20 minutes," Barrett said. "He got into one of the display cases without being seen and went back out the main entrance while the employees and other customers were there."

"There's a few things with each case that makes me feel like they are related. I don't feel like the same guy that was there Thursday is the same guy that was in the building Sunday."

Added Barrett, "It definitely seems in both incidents that maybe they'd been in the business beforehand.



Police are also looking to identify this man, believed to be a smaller-build white male, who broke into the Antique Mall on Nov. 3.

In both cases, it seems like they went in, knew what they were looking for, and left."

Neither of the suspects appeared to be armed during the commission of their crimes, and Barrett said the Police Department is working diligently to determine their identities so that they can be taken into custody.

"We encourage everyone to just be alert," Barrett said, speaking to area businesses. "In the incident from Nov. 7, there were several employees in the building when this occurred, so just be alert of your surroundings while you're

there.

"Any kind of lights on the outside of the building and interior security lights, make sure those are only accessible by a property owner."

People with information regarding either of the recent thefts at the Antique Mall are being asked to call 911 or Hiwassee PD at 706-896-2888.

