

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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Wednesday, January 16, 2019

Chief Carroll hangs up his badge; friends honor him with reception

By Shawn Jarrard
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The legend has retired. After leading the Blairsville Police Department as chief for 17 years, Johnny Carroll hung up his badge on Tuesday, Jan. 15.

His fellow officers and colleagues at Blairsville City Hall commemorated the event with a public retirement reception in his honor, held on Friday, Jan. 11, at the Brackett Room of the United Community Bank.

The event was a who's who of local residents and civic leaders, with appearances by his family, elected officials, Blairsville Cruisers – of which Johnny counts himself a member – and many of the friends Carroll has made over his nearly three decades in law enforcement.

He received a number of gifts that day to enjoy in retirement, including a collection of badges and patches from the different agencies he's worked with over the years,

a scrapbook of memories, a beautiful wood carving, and his "Barney Fife" bullet in a nicely framed box.

Before entering law enforcement, Carroll owned both a printing business and a manufacturing business.

That all changed, however, when about 27 years ago, he and his son Shannon paid their own way through the North Central Georgia Law Enforcement Academy to become the only father and son duo in the state to have attended and graduated police academy together.

From there, Carroll went to work for the Blairsville Police Department before it disbanded in the 1990s, after which he joined the Union County Sheriff's Office, where he maintained his Blairsville patrol area.

He worked with Union County for a while prior heading over to the Towns County Sheriff's Office for a few years, and before long, he found himself serving as assistant chief of the Young Harris



Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll posing with his men from the Blairsville Police Department at his retirement reception on Friday, Jan. 11, 2019.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

College Police Department. In the early 2000s, Carroll helped the city of Blairsville re-establish its Police Department, and he ended up returning here,

back to where he started, to lead the Blairsville Police for 17 years until his retirement.

Carroll said his favorite things about being police chief

in Blairsville have been the Shop with a Cop program for kids' Christmases, working alongside his tremendous police staff, and interacting with

the various business owners, residents and individuals who frequent the city.

The chief, who turned 72

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Baxter, Dyer swear in as top cops; city talks airport concerns

By Shawn Jarrard
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Family and friends of Michael "Bear" Baxter and Shaehl Dyer looked on with pride as the two men took their oaths of office as the top cops in Blairsville during the Jan. 8 regular City Council meeting.

Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley administered the Police Chief's oath to Baxter that evening, which served as a promotion from his longtime position as assistant chief following the Jan. 15 retirement of long-standing Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll.

Immediately after taking this oath, Chief Baxter in turn swore in his new right-hand man, Shawn Dyer, to fill the position of assistant police chief.

Baxter has been with the Blairsville Police Department for 18 and a half years, and Dyer has served with the city for 10 years, most recently as a sergeant.

Both Baxter and Dyer look forward to continuing to ensure that Blairsville remains a safe place to live, work and visit.



Michael "Bear" Baxter being sworn in as the Blairsville Police Chief by Mayor Jim Conley on Tuesday, Jan. 8, 2019.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

During the Department Head report later in the meeting, Baxter offered thanks to Chief Carroll "for what he's done for our department."

Chief Baxter and Assistant Chief Dyer officially started their new positions at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 15.

In other business that evening, the city welcomed several pilots to the meeting,

who joined the mayor and City Council to say they wanted a Precision Approach Path Indicator, or PAPI, system installed at the airport.

"I just wanted to let everybody know that we've got some of the up and coming pilots here, and we're here in hopes of the PAPI system being fast-tracked and installed,

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Holcomb pleads guilty to toddler's death, avoids trial in Union County

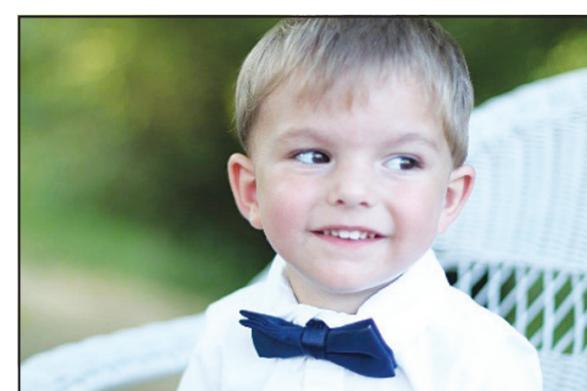
By Shawn Jarrard
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CLEVELAND – James Holcomb pleaded guilty on Thursday, Jan. 10, to vehicular homicide in the tragic 2017 death of 3-year-old Easton Cain, according to the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office.

Holcomb, 37, stood accused of operating his vehicle while high on methamphetamine in an Ingles parking lot in Cleveland nearly two years ago on Jan. 17, 2017.

While in a drug-induced stupor, Holcomb lost control of

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Three-year-old Easton Cain's life was tragically cut short when James Holcomb crushed him to death with his vehicle while high on methamphetamine in an Ingles' parking lot in January 2017.

Photo/GoFundMe

January Term 2019 Union County Grand Jury Indictments

News Special
North Georgia News

The following individuals, who are presumed innocent until proven guilty, were indicted during the January Term 2019 of the Union County Grand Jury:

Aaron Dale Patterson, four counts aggravated child molestation; four counts sodomy; four counts child molestation; two counts enticing a child for indecent purposes; two counts statutory rape; making a false statement; possession of methamphetamine; crossing the guard lines with drugs; theft by receiving property stolen in another state; burglary in the second degree.

Christopher Wade Dobson, rape; aggravated sexual battery.

Raheem Terrell Wrenn, two counts electronically furnishing obscene material to minors.

Corey Justin Brown, aggravated assault; simple battery, Family Violence; battery, Family Violence; hindering emergency telephone call; showing cruelty to children in the third degree.

Terry Christopher Anderson, unlawful acts of violence in a penal institution.

Robert Eugene Barnhill, unlawful acts of violence in a penal institution.

Robert Francis Poole, aggravated assault; criminal damage to property in the second degree; pointing gun or pistol at another; discharging a firearm under the influence; criminal trespass.

Melissa Cooper Vanwinkle, making a false statement; false report of a crime.

Nancy Lee Harrington, four counts deposit account fraud; four counts theft by deception.

Jason Brent Wagoner, three counts aggravated assault; three counts terroristic threats.

Jason Meeks, theft by receiving property stolen in another state.

Nicole Kendall Lanier, possession of methamphetamine.

William Phillip Lanier, possession of methamphetamine; possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance.

Matthew Alan Nottage, burglary in the first degree.

Todd Gregory Anderson, theft by conversion; recidivist.

James Keith Maney, driving license revoked; fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer; laying drags, failure to maintain lane; too fast for conditions; no proof of insurance.

Kyle Zon Moss, two counts terroristic threats.

Brandon Michael Warren, interference with government property; criminal trespass; tag light violation; improper tires.

William David Timpson, trafficking methamphetamine.

Daniel Taylor Rogers, two counts sale of marijuana; two counts sale of methamphetamine; three counts illegal use of communication facility; possession of marijuana with intent to distribute; possession of methamphetamine; possession of a controlled substance; possession of drug-related objects.

Norbert Jerome Gausepohl, possession of marijuana, less than an ounce.

Janet Elizabeth Lou Martin, possession of marijuana, less than an ounce.

Brandon Gene Patterson, possession of marijuana, less

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Tractor trailer overturns on mountain, knocks down power pole

By Shawn Jarrard
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A tractor trailer headed for Blairsville on Wednesday, Jan. 9, ended up going off the road around noon on Blood Mountain, just short of the Walasi-Yi Interpretive Center at Neel's Gap.

The driver of the truck cited heavy winds as a potential factor in the accident, and fortunately, no one was hurt.

However, the tractor trailer did strike a power pole as it left the road, bringing down a powerline that caused nearly 30 nearby meters to go offline.

Lumpkin County

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This tractor trailer overturned on Blood Mountain just before making it across the Union County line on Jan. 9, 2019, taking out a powerline in the process.

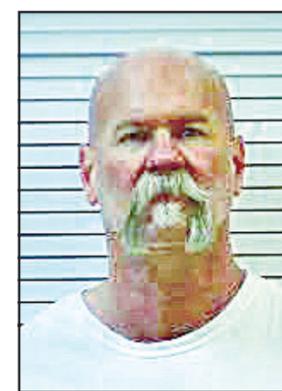
Heaton hit with 62 new federal charges in superseding indictment

By Shawn Jarrard
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Blairsville-based physician Dr. James Heaton is facing 62 new charges after a federal grand jury handed up a 274-count superseding indictment on Thursday, Jan. 3, 2019.

A superseding indictment is one that replaces an original, and in this case, the original 212-count indictment handed up on April 4, 2018, has been replaced with one featuring 62 additional charges against Heaton, according to court records.

Based on the new charges, Heaton is alleged to have controlled substances –



Dr. James Heaton

methadone, hydrocodone, oxycodone, oxycodone with acetaminophen, testosterone, and alprazolam, aka Xanax – "outside the scope of

professional practice and not for a legitimate medical purpose."

These additional charges are in line with previously established charges faced by Heaton and his two co-defendants in the federal prescription drug case, Dr. David Gowder and Mike Gowder.

The co-defendants participated in a Jan. 11, 2019, arraignment proceeding to hear the charges against them in the superseding indictment, and all three men pleaded not guilty to those charges. They pleaded not guilty to the charges in the original indictment on April 9, 2018.

Next steps in the case include a telephonic pretrial

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