

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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## BOE creates UC Schools Police Department

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Editor

The Union County School System has formed its own campus police department, which it plans on being fully operational by the end of August.

Students return to start the 2018-2019 school year on Friday, Aug. 3, and deputies with the Union County Sheriff's Office will help the schools maintain their security needs until the new department is ready to stand on its own.

Under the leadership of Superintendent John Hill, the school board office has been hard at work in the last month getting the Union County Schools Police Department up and running.

Hill said he and the school board were grateful to Union County Sheriff Mack

Mason and his deputies for their support of the school system over the years.

However, in light of recent high-profile school shootings and increased public outcry for heightened safety measures, Hill said he and the board felt it was time for the system to adopt a more hands-on approach to school safety.

A campus police department will allow the system to devote more of its resources toward year-round safety planning and implementation, all the while providing dedicated, in-house security through its own school resource officers.

Hill describes the campus police department as a law enforcement agency responsible for "all-encompassing school safety."

"They're going to have a large part in our safety manual and what we procedural

wise - this department will be very involved in that," said Hill. "We're going to really put a focus on student safety from this point forward."

"In this climate that we're in across the country, you see on the news all the time shootings in schools and all these things, and we're very aware of that. And we want to ensure that we're doing our part and doing everything that we can to protect the children of the community."

Chad Deyton, formerly the longtime captain in charge of the Narcotics Division of the Union County Sheriff's Office, will run the new department. Deyton led the May 30 multiagency active shooter drill at Union County High School.

The Union County Schools Police Department

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L-R: Union County Probate Judge Dwain Brackett, UC Schools Police Chief Chad Deyton, SROs Chad Berry and Jeff McConnell, with Superintendent John Hill. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

## EMC General Manager Nelms talks elections and more in meeting

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Editor

HIAWASSEE - Blue Ridge Mountain EMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms touched on a variety of subjects during his visit with the Mountain Movers and Shakers on Friday, July 20, at the Sundance Grill.

Nelms started off by noting that the Sept. 8 EMC Annual Meeting at the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center will mark the 80th anniversary of the BRMEMC.

"Just think what the people did 80 years ago when they gathered up there at that church in Young Harris and said, 'We need some lights,' and what they were able to accomplish with the support of the federal government with FDR and the New Deal, and the TVA," said Nelms.

Speaking of the annual meeting, Nelms said the run up to the election will see a return of paper ballots alongside online and in-person voting, as last year, members could only vote either online or in-person at the big meeting.

The Credentials and Elections Committee is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, July 24, and the names of upcoming EMC board



BRMEMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms at the Mountain Movers and Shakers meeting in Hiawassee on Friday, July 20. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

candidates will soon be made public.

Election packets will be mailed to members this year, each containing a ballot and election notice, and elections are expected to open the week of Aug. 6 ahead of the big Sept. 8 annual meeting.

"On that ballot, along with the candidates, we'll also have two bylaw amendments," said Nelms. "The one bylaw amendment ... the 'member in good standing' and what that

definition is, we're going to make sure that gets codified in the bylaws so everybody's clear on that."

Added Nelms: "Also, we'll have another bylaw amendment in there that's a request from members ... about district voting."

Nelms said one of the main items the membership needs to consider would district voting - which would restrict

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## Local agencies team up to locate missing public safety officers



A search and rescue chopper and a DNR truck near a landing zone off Georgia 180. The helicopter was used in a law enforcement search and rescue operation that took place on Saturday, July 21, and Sunday, July 22, near Brasstown Bald. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

News Special  
North Georgia News

BRASSTOWN BALD - On Saturday, July 21, a group of law enforcement officers and a subject in custody were in the area of Brasstown Bald on U.S. Forest Service land when they failed to make it back to their vehicles before dark, according

to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

The group of law enforcement officers were following up on a previous criminal investigation, according to the sheriff's office.

This group consisted of an agent with the Region 8

Office of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, a representative of the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office, an investigator from the Towns County Sheriff's Office, and an EMT from Towns County Emergency Medical Services.

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## UC High School Fishing Team recognized in BOE meeting



L-R: Terry Stover, Jeremy Stover, Nathan Stanley, Cole Davis and Charlie Davis in the July 17 regular BOE meeting. Not pictured: Dillan Snow. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Editor

You won't catch Cole Davis, Dillan Snow, Nathan Stanley and Jeremy Stover fishing for compliments, but they deserve them nonetheless.

These four young men are part of the Union County Fishing Team, and the fishing

pairs of Davis/Snow and Stanley/Stover both qualified to compete in the 2018 High School Fishing World Finals and National Championship Combined Event.

This event took place on Pickwick Lake and Wilson Lake in Alabama and featured four days of fishing between June 26 and June 30.

The boys received recognition for their accomplishments in the July 17 regular monthly meeting of the Union County Board of Education.

"It's been about 18 months ago, Mr. (John) Hill was principal (at the high school),

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## Union County fugitive, Cook, captured in Hidalgo, Texas

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
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A Blairsville man wanted locally in several counts of burglary in the first degree has been apprehended in Hidalgo, Texas, near the U.S.-Mexico border, according to the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Tracy Lynn Cook, 49, had been on the run since allegedly committing a string of burglaries in Union County on Jan. 11, according to the sheriff's office.

Authorities in Hidalgo, Texas, arrested Cook last week on drug-related charges, and they notified the sheriff's office after discovering that he'd been entered into the National Crime Information Center, according to the sheriff's office.

"We've been actively looking in the area," said UCSO Lt. Daren Osborn. "We'd heard he was here, in Towns County, in Clay County, North Carolina, in Cherokee County, Georgia. And then, we got word that he was trying to make his way to Mexico."

According to UCSO Staff Sgt. Lamar Dyer, who headed up the investigation, authorities learned recently that Cook had been hiding out for

a while at a residence that was later involved in a drug bust out on Copperhead Road.

The sheriff's office has also tied his time in hiding to Sam Hedden, 63, of Hiawassee, who was arrested earlier this year with illegal drugs worth \$7,000 in street value, according to the sheriff's office.

And now that Cook has been arrested, the sheriff's office is in the process of extraditing him from Texas.

Cook's alleged accomplice in the Jan. 11

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Tracy Lynn Cook

## Former Blairsville man dies in NC jail custody

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
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A former Blairsville resident died while in the custody of the Cherokee County (North Carolina) Detention Center on Wednesday, July 11, according to authorities.

Joshua Shane Long, 30, of Ducktown, Tennessee, formerly of Blairsville, was taken into custody on possession

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Joshua Long

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10 AM - Noon

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Registration for Union County Schools and Mountain Education Charter High School

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Run Off Election Results can be found at www.nganews.com and in next week's paper