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with manufacturing marijuana, though further charges are pending, Miller said.

Now is the time of year when marijuana plants get to be mature enough for harvesting, which is one of the reasons the Governor's Task Force had helicopters flying the North Georgia mountains on Thursday, Aug. 1.

When one of the helicopters spotted marijuana plants growing in five-gallon buckets behind a residence in the county, the Task Force contacted the Sheriff's Office, which promptly responded to the scene.

"The suspect heard the helicopter, went outside, pulled the plants and ran back into the residence," Miller said. "By the time the Sheriff's Office and Task Force agents made it to the house, we made contact with the male subject hiding under the back porch.

"We were able to make entry into the home under consent, where we found the marijuana plants in the toilets, trying to be flushed."

William Loren Campbell, 61, of Blairsville, was arrested at the scene and charged with manufacturing marijuana and tampering with evidence, and Miller said he expects additional charges in the case.

According to the Georgia Department of Public Safety, "The primary role of the task force is to eradicate domestic

marijuana cultivation within the state of Georgia, both indoor and outdoor, and to gather intelligence relating to its manufacture and cultivation."

And while they're always happy to get marijuana out of the county, Miller said that plant grows are not the problem they once were, and that much of the THC-related crime in the county stems from extracted THC, usually in higher concentrations, imported from out West.

"Each year, we're getting some grows, but it's one plant or 10 plants for personal use," Miller said. "It's nothing like it was 10 years ago, and it's the older generation – all the younger people are doing the THC cartridges if they're wanting to smoke pot, which is more dangerous.

"A marijuana plant, it's THC level is 10% to 20%. These cartridges are anywhere from 85% to 98% THC."

Earlier this year, Gov. Brian Kemp signed "Georgia's Hope Act" into law after it passed the Georgia General Assembly, effectively legalizing the regulated cultivation of marijuana by a limited number of licensed companies and universities for use by patients on the Low TCH Oil Registry.

Many law enforcement professionals around the state – including Union County's own Sheriff Mack Mason – feel that the enactment of this law will

pave the way for the legalization of recreational marijuana use, which is currently illegal in Georgia.

Even considering the changing dynamics and politics of marijuana and THC use, Miller said methamphetamine is still the most problematic drug in the county.

"That's what we deal with mostly, is meth," Miller said. "Meth is expensive. Once you get addicted to it, you've got to have it. When you run out of money, you resort to other things.

"Then, you're going to start seeing weed eaters and chainsaws stolen and finding them in the pawn shop. Or you'll do a search warrant on a drug dealer's house, and there will be five or six items of value found that came from the user that went and stole it and took it to the drug dealer to trade for meth."

Right now, meth costs between \$80 to \$120 per gram, Miller said. Over time, people who develop serious addictions can use up to a gram a day, which could cost upward of \$3,000 a month to supply, or \$36,000 a year potentially, all to support an illicit drug habit.

"There's a lot of crime I see that comes along with meth use, just because of the addictive nature of it," Miller said.

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truck that seemed to correspond with items allegedly stolen from the property, Osborn said.

By the time the deputy had turned around to pursue the truck, Jones had pulled into a residence off Ivy Log Road, Osborn said.

The deputy ran the tag and found that Jones was wanted on a parole violation,

though the deputy was unable to apprehend Jones because he had gotten out of his vehicle and disappeared into the woods nearby, Osborn said.

"Slow communication with computers is basically what happened," Osborn said. "He didn't know it was him, they just fit the description of the pickup and the person, and by the time (the Georgia Crime Information Center) got all the

information relayed back to the deputy, he had fled."

Added Osborn, "We've got his truck impounded, and it did have stolen goods in it from that particular residence."

Osborn said the Union County Sheriff's Office would like to thank its law enforcement counterparts in Fannin County for the continued excellent cooperation shared between the two agencies.

Federal Trial...from Page 1A

as the conspiracy to dispense and distribute controlled substances.

In light of the introduction of new evidence by federal prosecutors, and in response to the request by the attorneys for the two men, Judge Story ultimately decided to postpone the trial until Oct. 8, finding that continuing the trial to a later date would best serve the ends of justice.

It was the second time the trial had been rescheduled, having initially been set for Feb. 11, 2019, before being reset to April 8, 2019, due to scheduling conflicts with Heaton's attorney.

The latest motion filed on July 29 recognizes that the defendants' previous objections concerning the lack of notice to prepare for the new evidence had been satisfied by the trial's continuance.

However, the motion contends that the court still needs to rule "on the admissibility of the evidence" and asks that the court schedule a hearing to do so.

Essentially, Heaton's legal team is arguing that much of the recently introduced evidence is too old to be relevant, while other portions "have no relevance whatsoever to any of the (current) charges and are simply an attempt by the government to impugn Dr. Heaton's character."

According to the July 29 motion by Heaton's attorneys, "The government seeks to introduce evidence that Dr. Heaton had a consensual adult relationship with several patients, however, there is no allegation that he was selling narcotics to these patients or that his medical treatment of them was anything outside of the standard practice of medicine.

"The government further alleges that other patients were essentially dispensing medication ... This claim is entirely too remote to Dr. Heaton. There is no allegation that the pain pills were prescribed by Dr. Heaton or that Dr. Heaton knew about, much less profited from, any alleged transaction."

It is unknown at this time if the evidence in question will be admitted, but Story did issue a verbal order on March 27 to seal the summary of the evidence, which had been included as an exhibit in the defendants' joint motion to bar the introduction of the evidence.

As there are other motions to be decided in the case, the judge said in March that the court would schedule another pretrial conference, which he set in May for Aug. 8.

In addition to the July 29 renewed motion to bar evidence, Story must also decide on Gowder's March 26

request to have 47 of the 150 charges against him dismissed due to improper venue.

His attorneys argue in the motion that the charges in question entail activity alleged to have occurred outside the Northern District of Georgia's jurisdiction, presumably in either Tennessee, North Carolina or elsewhere.

Furthermore, the judge has yet to decide on Gowder's March 22 request for a nonjury trial, which would run simultaneously with Heaton's jury trial if granted and require Story to decide Gowder's innocence or guilt.

There's also the May 2018 motion to sever the defendants in the case

that has yet to be decided, which, if granted, would result in separate trials for the defendants, though Gowder's attorney has indicated he's no longer pursuing severance.

Currently, Gowder and Heaton are set to be tried as co-defendants by a jury of their peers beginning on Oct. 8, notwithstanding the granting of an above-mentioned motion and/or another resetting of the trial date.

They are presumed innocent of the charges, "and it will be the government's burden to prove each defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial," according to the U.S. District Attorney's Office in Atlanta.