

# Whittle...from Page 1A

with that call. No one knew how bad it would turn out, but that call to you was very important. Once the dispatchers realized what was happening, their training and purpose kicked in. They handled it professionally and the way they should.

"The sheriff's deputies, police officers and paramedics did the very best job they knew how to do. We need you.

"Third, you are very important to the public service people, too. You send them on the call, give directions when needed, all officers communicate with you when they need more officers to respond, when they need more units - fire, ambulance, rescue, etc.

"And then, there's one more thing that is important. If an officer is on a call and no communication is heard, the dispatcher does a 10-4 call. Is everything 10-4? As a loved one on the outside, I want someone to know that the deputy or officer is ok. They need you and can't do without y'all."

Mrs. Whittle went on to say that she had come to understand that most people want to be able to make a difference in their job.

"I believe this is why you sit in the chair you do for 12 hour shifts, six straight days," said Mrs. Whittle. "You make a huge difference. We all know you are not God - you are human. All you can do is let your training kick in and do your job.

"We want people in your chair who care about people, and if you care about people, when it doesn't go good, it will affect you. After Derrick died, many public service people wanted to quit. Jim talked to some and encouraged them to stay.

"We need people like y'all in our county. If this tragedy



Sharon and Jim Whittle shared their appreciation for Union County's 911 dispatchers on Thursday, Sept. 13.

had to happen to the Whittle family, I am so thankful that it happened in Union County, because without a doubt, I know Derrick received the best care he could have anywhere. We appreciate you all."

Their message was a powerful one, and Lt. Millie Baxter said there wasn't a dry eye in the room that evening.

"Anytime someone says thank you, that's huge," said Baxter, who is in charge of day-to-day operations at the 911 center. "It meant a lot to everybody here that they came in and said, 'Thank you for the job you do every day' - not just in that situation, but every day."

Union County 911 Director David Dyer also attended the meeting with the Whittles, and he, too, was thankful that they wanted to show his dispatchers the appreciation they deserve.

"People call 911, and they get somebody on the line, and they're asking for help," said Dyer. "For most people who call in, the dispatchers are just a voice on the line - they

don't know who they are, they don't know the job they do, they don't know what stress they're under.

"It's sort of an unsung thing, because if you're out there having an emergency, you see the face of a fireman or a policeman or a deputy or an EMT or paramedic, and you don't ever see the face of the dispatcher. You hear them.

"Sometimes, they have all this stress and excitement and problems that they have to solve, and they get the units out there, and then they never really know the outcome. And they never really get thought about, they never get appreciated for being that calm voice on the phone.

"So, it's really nice to have somebody come in here and say thank you for not only helping us with this call that we had that affected our lives, but also for helping everybody that you do every day."

Also that evening, the dispatchers in turn shared their appreciation for Baxter and Dyer, who have been working diligently to secure updated phones and radio systems for the 911 center.

Currently, 911 Dispatch is looking to hire two full-time positions and two part-time positions.

The Whittles just held a fundraiser yard sale at the Blairsville Civic Center on Friday, Sept. 21, and Saturday, Sept. 22, to raise money for the annual Derrick Whittle Memorial Scholarship Fund that goes to local students.

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 Who is Tom Taylor?  
 Tom has been in the insurance business 36 years since his medical retirement from the US Army as a LTC. He has numerous awards, such as LUTCF, LILL ADA, Lifeleaders of GA & SC, Instructor for new agents. His awards for the Army include Silver Star, Bronze Stars, Meritorious Service Medals, Army Commendation Medals, Combat Infantry Badge, Airborne Wings, Air Crew Wings, Air Medal, Meritorious Unit Award, Good Conduct Medal, Reservest National Guard Achievement Medal and National Defense Medal recipient.

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