

Trial...from Page 1A

The operation is cited as being an initiative "combining our efforts (criminal, civil, and educational) with those of our law enforcement partners to create one unified front in the battle against the opioid/heroin epidemic. One important aspect of Operation SCOPE is to prosecute those who are illegally prescribing, or distributing, painkillers."

The Drug Enforcement Agency has been involved in the multi-state investigation of the case, with assistance from the Union County Sheriff's

Office, Cherokee County (North Carolina) Sheriff's Office, Georgia Drugs and Narcotics Agency, and Zell Miller Mountain Parkway Drug Task Force.

As previously reported, Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley's office presented evidence last year for the local indictment of Mike Gowder, Dr. David Gowder and Dr. James Heaton, and the district attorney has been in contact with U.S. Attorney Pak.

"We're going to work

closely with the federal prosecutors as they work their case and we work our cases," said Langley in April. "They are not mutually exclusive. Both cases can be prosecuted. But certainly, we're going to coordinate our work with the federal prosecutors."

Both Gowders and Heaton were arrested in Union County on Feb. 4, 2016, following an extensive investigation by the Union County Sheriff's Office that originated after David Gowder was arrested in Fannin County on April 1, 2015, for allegedly attempting to fill fraudulent prescriptions, according to authorities.

Nix...from Page 1A

of the Country Cousins he's played with over the years actually have been related to him, though many were just fellow musicians he treated like family.

Of the four brothers, John is the only one still living.

Sam Ensley, longtime Union County musician and mandolin player, was instrumental in getting a few "Cousins" together for the Oct. 12 event, including himself, Rhonda Mason, John Cochran, Jeri Ann King, Wendell Patterson and others.

Nix and the Country Cousins played several well-known songs, including "The Gambler," "I Want To Go Home," "Truck Drivin' Man," "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," "Sioux City Sue," "Take Me Back to Tulsa," and Eddy Arnold's "Cattle Call."

The audience of over a hundred joined in clapping with the band on a couple of the numbers, especially when Nix played "Orange Blossom Special" on the fiddle.

Nix had CDs for sale after the show and graciously posed with fans for pictures.

In 2016, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and the Union County Historical Society both presented Nix with proclamations honoring the history and importance of John Nix and the Country Cousins' contribution to Union County culture.

In 2001, John, Cranford and Clayton Nix were inducted into the Atlanta Country Music Hall of Honor.



Rhonda Mason accompanying John Nix on the fiddle during the Friday, Oct. 12, concert at the Historic Union County Courthouse.

Photo by Mark Smith



John Nix and John Cochran at the Friday Night Concert Series at the Courthouse on Friday, Oct. 12.

Photo by Mark Smith

Forest Service...from Page 1A

Union County 4-H shooting sports, though that will be determined at a later date.

In the interest of time, residents planning to attend the Oct. 24 public hearing may also email their questions to commissioner@uniongov.com so that Commissioner Paris can address them directly in his presentation at the hearing.

In addition to the hearing, next steps for the proposed range include the completion of a sound study, an environmental analysis, a couple of public comment periods, a final review process, and, if everything goes well, the issuing of a special use permit.

"This public hearing is the opening salvo, so to speak, of the timeline that the Forest Service has put together as to

what needs to be done to get to the acquisition of the land off of 180," said Gun Club Chairman Paul Clark.

Clark said he hoped the sound study would be completed soon so that residents could be informed of the results in the public hearing.

The Gun Club now

boasts 408 members, which is certainly impressive for a local organization that started a little over a year ago, and the club will hold its first ever annual meeting on Nov. 1 inside the Blairsville Civic Center at 6 p.m.

People looking for more information about the Gun Club or to sign up as a member can visit UnionCountyGunClub.org or .com.

Patterson...from Page 1A

While Osborn and Dyer were busy investigating Patterson's alleged property crimes, UCSO Detective Marc Pilote was working on another case involving Patterson and a juvenile female, said Pilote.

"This has been going on for a period of a few months, and it was something that I was actively working," said Pilote. "Coincidentally, at the same time when Osborn took out the warrant for burglary, that's when all my information kind of came forward.

"And due to the information and the detailed events that took place – very sexual in nature – I took out warrants on him."

Stemming from Pilote's investigation, Patterson has been charged with two counts of statutory rape, four counts of aggravated child molestation, eight counts of child molestation, and one count of interference with child custody, said Pilote.

The investigation into Patterson's alleged activities is ongoing, according to Osborn and Pilote, and Patterson was being held without bond at the Union County Jail as of press time.

Separately, the Towns County Grand Jury indicted Patterson in late September on two counts entering an automobile, two counts criminal attempt to commit a felony, and criminal damage to property in the second degree, according to court documents.

The indictments stem from crimes allegedly committed by Patterson on Aug. 8 in Towns County, according to court documents.