

Towns County

4070 St. Hwy 339

Sheriff's Office

Young Harris, GA 30582

Phone (706) 896-4444

Fax (706) 896-3349

Press Release

Contact: Sheriff Chris Clinton

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Phone: (706) 896-4444

March 7, 2008

“Operation: Byrne Blitz” a success in Towns County

Hiawassee, GA, March 5, 2008: Towns County Sheriff's Office, along with agents from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Appalachian Drug Task Force, Department of Natural Resources, Sentinel Probation, and Hiawassee Police Department served numerous search and arrest warrants and followed up on leads resulting in arrests and seizures of numerous drugs in Towns County.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation sponsored a statewide operation to apprehend drug offenders. Sheriff Chris Clinton and the Appalachian Drug Task force worked together to make Operation: Byrne Blitz a success for Towns County.

In a 24-hour operation, the Towns County Team served several search and arrest warrants in Towns County and assisted with one search warrant and two arrest warrants in Union County with the approval of Union County Sheriff, Scott Stevens, who also participated in the statewide operation. The Towns County Team consisted of Towns County Sheriff, Chris Clinton, two agents from the GBI, two agents from the Appalachian Drug Task Force, Detective Mike Davis, Deputy Brian Wilson and K-9 Rocky, two DNR Rangers, Police Chief Jimmy Wright and Dawn Wright of Sentinel Probation.

The Towns County Team arrested nine people total for numerous drug offenses for drugs ranging from methamphetamine, crack cocaine, cocaine, marijuana, an assortment of prescription pills and a substance that has been sent to the GBI crime lab for identification after field-testing positive for heroin/morphine.

Ron Long of Young Harris was charged with distribution of a controlled substance, possession of cocaine and possession of marijuana less than an ounce. Daniel Caruso of Young Harris was charged with possession of cocaine and possession of crack cocaine. Debra Hoffman of Young Harris was charged with distribution of methamphetamine. Michael Risinger of Young Harris was charged with distribution of methamphetamine. Melvin Masters of Hiawassee was charged with possession of methamphetamine.

Shannon Silvey of Hiawassee was charged with a violation of bond conditions. Tommy Luke Bright of Hiawassee was charged with possession of marijuana less than an ounce, possession of methamphetamine, possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute and possession of untaxed liquor. Two Union County residents were also arrested and charged with violations of the Georgia Controlled Substance act.

Sheriff Chris Clinton said, "I am very pleased with the results of this effort. We worked very hard and were able to get dangerous drugs off the streets. I am very proud of our deputies and the agents and officers involved for the effort put forth during this operation. Those who do not work for me could have called it quits much sooner but everyone worked together for twenty-four straight hours making this operation a success in Towns County. This is the kind of dedication that will make a difference for our children's future."

Towns County currently does not have its own drug task force agent and shares resources with Union County. The unofficial preliminary results suggest that Towns and Union Counties led the state for the number of drugs seized and arrest and search warrants served during this 24-hour operation.

As many as 40 other states in the nation participated in "Operation: Byrne Blitz." The operation recognizes the federally funded Byrne Justice Assistance Grants.

For more information about the Towns County Sheriff's Office visit www.townscountysheriffsoffice.com.

-End-