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2017 Walk for Recovery, the first one Union County has ever had. Photo/Darren Harper

Center, more than 30 people walked together around the Downtown Blairsville Square, taking a stand for those suffering from addiction, those who are recovering from addiction and

those who have lost their battle against it.

"Anyone who wanted to show support of the recovery community and what they are achieving could walk,"

said Sales. "The people walking didn't have to be in recovery themselves or know someone who is in recovery or struggling from addiction. This year's walkers included those

recovering from addiction, ambassadors for recovery, family members, providers and some that have lost someone they love to addiction."

While this may be the first "Walk for Recovery" to take place in Union County, it is certainly not the first of its kind. As part of National Recovery Month, which is sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and observed in September of each year, thousands of walks take place all across America in support of all those who have fallen prey to the disease of addiction, and for those who struggle with the fight against it.

"Walk for Recovery is a National Recovery Month," said Sales. "It's to express gratitude, convey hope and celebrate all in recovery and those who help make recovery happen. People of all ages and walks of life come together in support of the recovery community and what they have achieved one step at a time."

National Recovery Month is meant to increase awareness and understanding of substance abuse disorders and to celebrate those who have recovered from such, with the recovery walks being one way to do so.

Walks for recovery began more than 10 years ago, with people all over the country gathering together to walk in unison as a beacon of hope and support for those in recovery or struggling to find their way there.

"These walks have been going on for almost 16 years now," said Sales. "Since there'd never been one in Union County before, I decided it was time to have one."

After the walk was

completed, all those who participated gathered together to enjoy food and fellowship, sharing words of encouragement amongst themselves as they continue to take a stand against substance abuse.

"This is so important for our community," said Sales. "We need to be uplifting and encourage those who are struggling with recovery or who maybe haven't made it there yet. "Everyone deserves an opportunity to a better life."



The Walk for Recovery took place on Friday, Sept. 15, in Downtown Blairsville. Pictured here, a reception at the Blairsville Civic Center. Photo/Lily Avery

'Weapons Carry Class back by popular demand'

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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Back by popular demand, the Union County Sheriff's Office is once again sponsoring a Weapons Carry Class at the Haralson Memorial Civic Center.

The event occurs Tuesday, Sept. 26, and will run from 7 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

The class is open to the public and free of charge, and will be held at the Haralson Memorial Civic Center at 165 Wellborn Street in Blairsville.

At the start of the meeting, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason and Paul Clark, president of the newly formed Union County Gun Club, will give a brief update on the club's organization and how to join.

"Our goal is to get a public firing range in Union County," Sheriff Mason said.

Details regarding the firing range and how to be-

come Gun Club members will be available. Also, Gun Club members will be on hand to give information on how to join the club.

"The gun club/shooting range effort must be organized in order to get it underway," Sheriff Mason said. "This county has many thousands of acres of U.S. Forest Service land, and we would hope to acquire a tract such as the one in Cherokee County, North Carolina, and in Towns County."

Sheriff Mason continued: "Let's do more than just talk about getting us a place to shoot. The Union County Sheriff's Office is required by law to qualify shooting twice yearly and we don't even have a place for the county sheriff's office to shoot. A shooting range will be of benefit to both law enforcement and civilians."

Staff Sgt. Billy Purcell of the Union County Sheriff's Office will conduct the training for the weapons carry class.

Sgt. Purcell has more than 30 years of law enforcement experience, including as a Georgia P.O.S.T. certified instructor with Firearms and Defensive Tactics as his major course of instruction.

The sergeant was Senior Instructor from 1986 to 2010 at Abraham Baldwin Agriculture College Police Academy, and in addition, he was the Assistant Director of the Academy from 2002 to 2010.

Sgt. Purcell has a degree in Criminal Justice and graduated from the Professional Management Program, Command College, and also was a graduate of the prestigious Federal Bureau of Investi-



Union County Sheriff Mack Mason

gation's National Academy 159th Session.

In addition to his law enforcement service and education, Purcell was one of the few officers selected to travel to Israel and serve as a Law Enforcement Exchange Officer.

Sgt. Purcell taught this same weapons carry class in July and on two other occasions at the Blairsville Civic Center.

"This class is back by popular demand," Sheriff Mason said.

The invitation for this community event is open to the public.

The training will cover "Do's and Don'ts" for weapons carry and provide an overview of how people can legally defend themselves and their property as citizens.

No firearm is required. Sheriff Mason said he will be looking forward to seeing you there.

Historical Society needs your help

Do you have pictures taken during the 1960s or earlier showing the inside of the historical courtroom at Union County Courthouse?

The Union County Historical Society is looking for photos of the inside of the courtroom depicting the original judge's bench and other views of the courtroom. The Society would like to restore the courtroom to more resemble it during this time frame. Please bring your photos by the historical courthouse on the Square. We will copy the photo and return it to you. Thank you for your help.