

BOE...continued from Page 1A

Thursday, April 20.
 "This project, to me, is one of the best examples that we can have of something that happens in the school system," said Dr. Fred Rayfield, Union County Schools Superintendent. "This is a really nice piece of teamwork from a lot of different levels in the school system."

At the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year, the Georgia Department of School Nutrition kickstarted a "Shake It Up" initiative to change the culture and atmosphere of school nutrition.

This initiative was focused on three areas - meals, cafeterias and the school as a whole.

Each school system was encouraged to take the pledge and participate in creating an overall better environment for students by changing the routine of daily mealtime.

Walker took this pledge to heart and began working toward making breakfast an experience that all students could enjoy, not just the early risers.

For over a year, the school has offered a second breakfast that occurs during first period class change, giving students who might not be hungry at 7 a.m. the opportunity to eat.

Walker embraced the "Shake It Up" initiative as a way to improve not only student breakfasts, but also all meals throughout the school day.

In October, Walker invited the Georgia Department of School Nutrition to Union County Schools during National School Lunch Week to see the progress the schools have made since accepting the challenges brought on by the



Union County Schools Nutrition Director Courtney Walker.

initiative.

Since that visit, Union County Schools have been contacted on numerous occasions to conduct projects for the state nutrition department, including the video that was showcased during last Thursday's BOE meeting.

"I guess we made a very good impression on them because we've been contacted several times since then to do things for them," said Walker. "I've received several comments from the state. We had over 8,000 views, which was unheard of for them. We wanted to share the video with everyone today."

This video focused on the second breakfast option available for students, and included interviews from Dr. Rayfield and Walker explaining the importance of having breakfast options and how it is beneficial to students.

"We now have been requested, by the state, to do more videos for the school

nutrition department to show at their meetings all across the state," said Walker.

Also during the meeting, Union County Elementary School Principal Trish Cook and Union County Middle School Principal Gwen Stafford received Title I awards for excellence in education for their respective schools.

"Last month, we made some announcements about high performance schools," said Dr. Rayfield. "In today's mail, we received some recognition from the state for our Title I High Performance Schools."

"I think it's important to remember that the state considers these to be role model schools. Union County Schools is on that list where teachers from all across the state can come visit our schools and see how we're successful and what we're doing."

In other Union County School news, at the end of the April board meeting, the impending resignation of Associate Superintendent Dr. Jeremy Williams was confirmed for an effective day of May 31 of this year.

It was announced earlier this month that Williams was the sole finalist for the superintendent position at Gainesville City Schools. He is expected to be hired in a May 1 meeting of the Gainesville City School Board.

UCSO continues to crack down on theft in county

By Shawn Jarrard
 North Georgia News
 Staff Writer

A Union County man has been arrested following the theft of more than \$10,000 in merchandise from the Blairsville Walmart, according to the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Thomas Edward Jones, 51, has been charged initially with felony theft by shoplifting in connection with stolen Walmart merchandise, as well as driving while license suspended or revoked, no proof of insurance and having a suspended tag, according to UCSO Lt. Daren Osborn.

No bond had been set as of press time Monday, according to Lt. Osborn.

The case, which is still under investigation with further charges pending, was handled by SSgt. Lamar Dyer of the UCSO Criminal Investigations Division, according to Lt. Osborn.

"We've been trying to catch him for the last month or so," said Lt. Osborn, adding that Jones had been caught on camera multiple times walking out with high-end electronic items.

About a month ago, Lt. Osborn said he made a Facebook post containing an image from security footage of a man walking out of the Blairsville Walmart with what appears to be one or more big screen televisions loaded into a shopping cart.

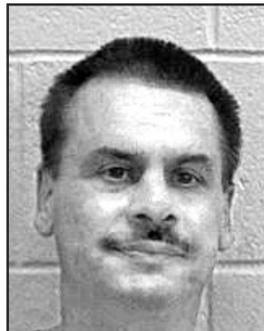
Unfortunately, no one identified the man via Facebook, and it wasn't until last week that the case broke open when surveillance efforts discovered the individual in question had come into the store, according to Lt. Osborn.

SSgt. Dyer, who had been working hard to catch the individual, confronted and arrested Jones on the evening of April 19, according to Lt. Osborn.

"Don't steal at Walmart, because we'll eventually catch



Jonathan Davis



Thomas Jones

you," said Lt. Osborn. "We have cameras, which were a great help."

In an unrelated incident, a motorist speeding through Suches ended up being arrested for felony theft a couple of weeks ago.

Jonathan Dewayne Davis, 39, of Dahlonega, was arrested on April 7 on a charge of felony theft by taking, according to Lt. Osborn, after reports came in of an older model GMC Jimmy driving recklessly in the area.

"The evening of Friday, April 7, I received a phone call on my cellphone from some people in Suches I know, and they wanted to know if we were looking for a red and white Jimmy," said Lt. Osborn. "I said yeah, for speeding, and they said, well, it's parked on Coopers Creek Road, abandoned down there."

Lt. Osborn was busy working another case, so he sent SSgt. Bradley Glass and Deputy Josh Bergen to look in on the abandoned vehicle.

"While they were in route over there, the same person had called me back and said, 'That dude just stole my motorcycle out of my barn,'" said Lt. Osborn.

The man who had stolen the motorcycle had changed over to driving a smaller GMC Jimmy pulling a trailer, and when Glass and Bergen arrived at the location of the abandoned vehicle on Coopers Creek Road, they

found both the older model and the smaller model Jimmys along with Davis, according to Lt. Osborn.

Davis was taken into custody following a brief altercation as he attempted to elude the deputies, according to Lt. Osborn.

At the time of his arrest, Davis was in possession of methamphetamine and marijuana, according to Lt. Osborn, as well as the motorcycle previously identified as having been stolen.

A week later, a Florida couple arrived at their Suches home to discover a four-wheeler and three-wheeler missing from their property, and Lt. Osborn said he put two and two together.

"I sort of had an idea of where it went," said Lt. Osborn, adding that Davis confessed to taking those vehicles as well when confronted.

The four-wheeler and three-wheeler had been stashed on some private property not far from the scene with the Jimmys, though the owner of the private property remained unaware of the stolen vehicles' presence, according to Lt. Osborn.

All stolen vehicles have been returned to their rightful owners, according to Lt. Osborn.

As for the Jimmys, they belonged to the mother of Davis' girlfriend, according to Lt. Osborn.

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