

Scott Stephens seeks reelection for Sheriff of Union County

Thank you, Citizens of Union County, for allowing me, Scott Stephens, the honor of serving as your Sheriff for the past 12 years. Once again, I am asking for your support and vote in November for another term in office. The election in November is not about politics or who belongs to what political party, it is about maintaining experience, integrity and dedication in our Sheriff's Office.

I have kept my commitment to you to have a Sheriff's office that maintains law and order, an office that is involved with the community, and an office that meets and exceeds the expectations of our citizens for a safe community.

There are three major issues that stand out in this election to me – professionalism

in the way my office has conducted business, deep family ties to the county I love dearly, and always doing everything possible to continually meet the needs of our community while maintaining a reasonable budget in an effort to help keep our taxes among the lowest in the state.

My parents are Jeep and Lela Stephens. I have been happily married for 21 years to Teresa (daughter of Hubert and Evelyn Shook) and we are the proud parents of McKinlee (14 year old high school student) and Zeb (6 year old kindergarten student). My family is the most important thing to me. Also very close to me are my friends, both those I grew up with, and everyone who has moved to our community throughout the years. Together we have a great community.

My life has been devoted to law enforcement and to the safety of this community. I am a Certified Law Enforcement Officer with nearly 20 years of experience: 12 years as Sheriff and 7 years as a Deputy Sheriff. As deputy sheriff I was the K-9 Officer (5 years) and held the positions of Shift Supervisor and as Lieutenant. I was raised in a law enforcement environment as my father was in law enforcement for 30 years.

After graduating from Union County High School, I pursued law enforcement training at North Central Georgia Law Enforcement Academy, and the National Narcotic Detector K-9 School. As Sheriff, I am active in the Georgia

Sheriff's Association, which allows me and my staff to learn the new laws and legislation passed and how to enforce those laws. I am Co-Chairman of the Appalachian Drug Task Force, I work closely with the Union County Anti-Drug Coalition, and I serve on the Board of Directors for the Union County 911.

In the past 12 years, my office has been involved with high profile cases that drew national attention and our office received numerous commendations from multiple law enforcement agencies such as the GBI, FBI and ATF. Our conviction rate of criminals who have been arrested is among the highest in the state. The respect for the Union County Sheriff's Office is extremely high both in our county and in our region.

My office maintains a safe, secure jail that is ran efficiently and professionally with personnel who are devoted to their jobs. Our office staff of deputies, investigators, and office personnel are deeply committed to their jobs and they serve you with professionalism and devotion to duty. We work closely and harmoniously with the district attorney's office and the courts to insure those guilty of crimes are brought to justice.

To assist our inmates to prepare to cycle back into society better than when they came in, I instituted an in-jail GED program with the assistance of trained professional educators.

The space for this Re-



Scott Stephens

Election announcement is limited, so it is impossible to list the numerous accomplishments that have been achieved during my administration. The proudest accomplishment I can personally point to is that after 20 years on the job and 12 years as your Sheriff, I remain a "law man" with proven, professional and progressive leadership – but I am not a politician. Be you a Democrat, Republican or Independent, I give you again my pledge to continue to serve ALL the citizens of our GREAT community.

The election for Sheriff in our county is not about party, it is about keeping the right PERSON working for you – a person who is Qualified, Certified and Dedicated with Proven, Effective Leadership.

I thank you for your past support and ask you again to vote to re-elect Sheriff Scott Stephens as Sheriff of Union County, Georgia.

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said that Union County was able to host the program due to cooperation between all the facilities, private and county.

"If it wasn't for all their help we wouldn't have the great training environment that we do," said Martin. "The dogs are trained in the event of a bomb threat so that teams will be available to secure the area. We are fortunate to have it up here this year. Usually we go to south or middle Georgia but this is the first time that they've come here.

"It's turned out to be a

fantastic training session," he said. "All the handlers love this area and regardless of how hot it is here, it's a whole lot better than dealing with sand fleas in south Georgia."

Investigator Martin gave a special thank you to everyone from the park services, Sheriff Scott Stephens and the Sheriff's Office, the Commissioner's Office and the Union County School Board of Education for all their help.

"The school board did wonders for us," said Martin. "Anything that we

needed to use, they were more than happy to help. It also gives the local guys and those from surrounding counties a chance to familiarize themselves with the schools in the event of a threat."

GEMA and Homeland Security are not only establishing new teams across the state but also are improving the capabilities of existing teams through upgrades in equipment, vehicles, computers, leashes, animal food, and veterinary services, according to GEMA's Web site.

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Additional features of the Fire Safety House is to teach kitchen safety, home heating safety and reporting an emergency.

"We appreciate everyone coming out to join us today," said Station 4 spokesperson David Dyer. "It's been very hot, there's been a great crowd and we've had a lot of fun. We've had a lot of demonstrations, with our fire trucks, we've simulated a house fire, we've simulated an incident where we had to use the Jaws of Life and we hope we've done our part to educate the people that depend on us."

The families that came out took part in ATV rides, watched simulated demonstrations, and enjoy a hamburger and hot dog with all the fixings. It was hot and there was plenty of liquids to keep folks hydrated.

A firefighter boot was placed at each dinner table to allow locals to chip in and help raise funds for the volunteer department.

Dyer said the annual event was all about getting to know the many volunteers who dedicate their time to protect public safety interests, including the lives of their friends and neighbors.

The department has 80 volunteers, with 14 of those volunteers located at Station 4.

"I think everything has gone fine today, there are a good number of people out today," Dyer said. "We really appreciate the public support, we appreciate all the support that the public gives us.

"In turn, we're giving them something back today and hopefully, they won't need to see us on a professional basis," Dyer said. "We had a large crowd today, we had enough drinks, enough chips and enough hot dogs and hamburgers to go around. It's always a good feeling to see this much local support."

For the most part, the firefighters are just regular folks with one exception. They've gone through many hours of intensive training to learn how to prevent a disaster in their community. They've dedicated themselves to public service because they want to make a difference in the community where they live.

Dyer said that one of the most important things offered at the Open House event is a tour through the Fire Safety House.

"We had a lot of kids out here today, I think they had a great time in the Fire Safety House," he said. "We smoke up the house and show



GFC Ranger Tony Harkins (R) explains his agency's Firewise program. Photo/Charles Duncan

them how to crawl out of the house, how smoke detectors work and what not to do if their house were ever on fire."

Dyer praised the stations chefs, who rotated duties as situations occurred that called them away.

"We've had several cooks today because we've had so many things going on," he said. "I think they did a pretty good job."

Dyer said the Fire Station 4 Open House is an annual event.

"We want the public to come see all of our equipment, ask any kind of question and we try to help people out with smoke detectors," he said. "Overall, it's been a great day.

"The biggest part of open house is education,"

Dyer said. "It's teaching people who we are, where we are and gives us a chance to show them what their donations buy. It also gives them a chance to identify with their firefighters up close and in person."

It also gave locals a chance to meet members of the Georgia Forestry Commission up close and in person.

"We do a lot of work with the fire department," GFC Ranger Tony Harkins said. "One of the main things we like to promote is our Firewise Program. Firewise communities help us, they help the fire department too. It's about educating communities about what they can do to prevent their communities from becoming victims in the event of a wildfire."