

# Shooting...from Page 1A

for Matheson that Tuesday, which didn't last long, as the Clay County, North Carolina, Sheriff's Office found his truck outside his father's house in Hayesville less than an hour after the shooting, Clay County Sheriff Bobby Deese said.

"Due to the circumstances surrounding the shooting," Deese said, "we wanted to do everything we could to keep the public and that community safe."

"Once his vehicle was located and confirmed he was inside that residence, deputies set a perimeter to keep visual on him. If he was able to flee in a vehicle, we wanted to keep him contained as much as possible to minimize the threat to the public."

Deese requested assistance from State Highway Patrol, a hostage negotiator with the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office, and SWAT assistance from the Macon and Jackson County sheriff's offices, all of North Carolina.

"When SWAT arrived, a formal plan was put in place and a search warrant was executed at the residence, where Matheson surrendered to deputies without incident," Deese said. "He was taken into custody (at 8:17 p.m. on Jan. 26) and transported to the Clay County Detention Center."

At press time, Matheson remained in custody in North Carolina on a \$1 million secured bond, pending transfer to Georgia. He made his first

appearance in Clay County District Court on Jan. 28, during which he declined to waive extradition for transport to face his Georgia charges.

"Georgia officials have begun the process to apply for a Governor's Warrant while Matheson awaits his next court date in Clay County on Feb. 15, when arguments against extradition can be heard," the Clay County Sheriff's Office said.

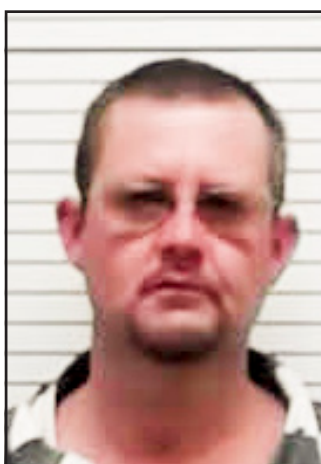
Matheson has been charged only and is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

This is not Matheson's first family violence arrest, according to Hiwassee Chief Smith, who arrested Matheson in 2017 after he reportedly assaulted his own mother where they both worked.

He was also arrested twice last year for domestic violence-related crimes in Clay County, including on July 13, 2020, for assault by strangulation and again on Oct. 9, 2020, for violation of Domestic Violence Order, Sheriff Deese said.

A GoFundMe page has been set up for Crystal at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/recovery-for-crystal-matheson>.

"She is trying to recover in the hospital right now," page organizer Luke Goodman said. "She currently has everyday bills, utilities, and a mortgage to pay for, on top of the hospital bills that she will soon have."



**Charles Jason Matheson**

"We would also like to get her an attorney that specializes in domestic violence abuse. She has been through enough as it is before all of this happened!"

"We would like to ask everyone to help us reach our fundraiser goal for her. And also, please pray for her and a full recovery! She is a God-fearing, God-loving Christian and a wonderful person!"

The Clay County resident said Saturday she was grateful to God and the many professionals who have been working in her corner, including local police, GBI, her office nurses, Towns County EMS, Air Life Georgia, ER staff, and the trauma team and surgeons who operated on her.

"I have eight gunshot wounds – I know I shouldn't be here, but I am," she said. "My

God is beyond comprehension in His goodness. I am doing my best to keep focused on getting better. It's hard. It's not pretty. And some days I'm not as strong as I want to be.

"I've never had pain like I've had, but at least I'm here. It's slowly easing up some, and I am so grateful. I can't get around; I can stand and take a few shuffle steps, but it's a blessing to do that. It wears me out just to do that, but I'm determined to keep trying.

"I have quite a bit of nerve pain issues in one leg. I ask that y'all keep praying for me. I pray for pain relief and strength so I can do things a little easier. I ask that you pray for my blood pressure to normalize so that I can work with Physical Therapy and get stronger.

"I ask you to pray for wounds to heal so I can move around without fear of hurting something more. I'm trying to answer messages. There's a lot, so please bear with me.

"I love all of you. You have no idea what you mean to me and my son and my family. Overwhelmed doesn't even describe it. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

# Ninth District...from Page 1A

a great program.

"You make the people accountable for what they should be doing to get themselves in line. I won't say they have to prove they need the assistance, but they have to be accountable for it and try to get their act together."

The offices of Towns and Union counties are looking to receive around \$5,000 each, which is less than other grants but will still assist select eligible families in paying a month of rent or utilities.

Sullivan said many people's rent payments have gone up during the pandemic, and that "there's no available housing."

"It is heartbreaking, really. We have just struggled with that," she said. "On this particular program, we can only pay like one month. But on other programs we had, we were paying three months at a time for some of these people."

Residents in dire circumstances can reach out to Ninth District Opportunity for assistance finding a place to go in their time of need, though as Sullivan pointed out, it can be challenging to locate eligible living spaces in the area.

"We can help with homeless families and with people that are being evicted," Teresa

Stephens of Towns County's Ninth District office said. "And right now, money that is tied to the eviction (assistance) is on hold because of that mandated federal moratorium.

"If families are without a home, then we have to find what is called fair-market value homes or they have to be rent reasonable. In this area, it is very hard to find homes that are rent reasonable or that are on the level that the federal government wants."

The use of these programs by people in need in the North Georgia Mountains is more common than many folks might think.

"We use this quite a bit," Stephens said. "It is a definite need, and there are several homeless families in this area."

"If they are willing to work with us, then we can get them into a hotel or motel for a limited number of days until we can find them housing. Most of the time we have to transfer them to other counties."

Stephens can be reached at the Towns County Food Pantry by calling 706-896-4783. For more information on Ninth District Opportunity programs, visit [NDO.org](http://NDO.org).



The Chatsuge Regional Hospital Rehabilitation & Wellness Center in Hiwassee was taped off by investigators following the Jan. 26 domestic-related shooting there. Photo by Todd Forrest