

# Big Cheese...from Page 1A

the clock to get drugs off the streets of Union County – it's a thankless job and one that keeps them busy.

On Thursday, May 24, UCSO Investigators raided The Big Cheese pizza restaurant on Murphy Highway.

A two-month investigation leading up to the raid resulted in the discovery that marijuana was being sold out of the business by the restaurant's manager, William Reed Bennett, 37, according to the sheriff's office.

Search warrants executed on the business and home of the manager yielded a "substantial amount of marijuana" and a large quantity of cash at the restaurant, as well as firearms in both places, according to the sheriff's office.

Bennett has been charged with two counts distribution of marijuana, possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, possession of a firearm during the commission of a crime and possession of drug-related objects, according to the sheriff's office.

Jonathan August Grader, 19, one of Bennett's employees at The Big Cheese, has been arrested also and charged with possession of marijuana, according to the sheriff's office.

Investigators are currently looking into other persons of interest in the case, according to the sheriff's office.

In a separate case, Blairsville residents Cheryl Ann Hubert, 25, and Jerry Benjamin Goodner III, 34, were indicted in April with violating the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act.

Together, the two racked up RICO and 46 other charges related to the sale of drugs, including methamphetamine, marijuana, Xanax and oxycodone, according to the sheriff's office.

Hubert and Goodner were living together at 288 Bitter Creek Rd. during the course of the investigation, which began in August 2017 after detectives received information that Hubert was selling drugs, according to the sheriff's office.

"It's very common right now – a lot of meth is coming back right now, so we're getting hit by it a lot," said Capt. Deyton.

In another recent case, investigators arrested Farron Lamar Hensley, 41, and Heather Chantell Dyer, 25, on prior arrest warrants, only to discover approximately 40 grams of methamphetamine in their possession, according to



William Bennett



Jonathan Grader



Cheryl Hubert



Jerry Goodner III



Farron Hensley



Heather Dyer

the sheriff's office.

"Fannin County assisted us with information on where Mr. Farron Hensley was residing in Union County," said Capt. Deyton. "It was a little pull-behind camper off of 13 Warren Dr. in Blairsville, off of Jewell Mason Road."

Hensley was wanted for probation violation out of Fannin County, and Dyer was wanted here for coordinating with multiple inmates to get controlled substances within the Union County Jail, according to the sheriff's office.

Following the investigation, Hensley was charged with trafficking; possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute; possession of alcohol/drugs/weapons inside guard lines; possession of drug-related objects; driving while license suspended; no proof of insurance; and expired tag.

Dyer was charged with trafficking; possession of a

controlled substance with intent to distribute; possession of alcohol/drugs/weapons inside guard lines; crossing guard lines with weapons, intoxicants or drugs; criminal attempt; use of communications to facilitate a drug transaction; and possession of drug-related objects.

Capt. Deyton said his team and the sheriff were thankful for the cooperation with the Fannin County Sheriff's Office that led to the arrests.

"And in addition to those arrests, we have settled on \$16,000 that's been awarded to the sheriff's office through an earlier drug seizure," said Sheriff Mason. "Also, people can watch the paper, the sheriff's office will be auctioning off a house about a mile from town that we received under drug seizure."

"The minimum bid will be \$135,000. The certified appraisal of the property is

\$150,000. It's a very nice two-bedroom, two-bath cedar sided house with a basement. They can look at the legal ad in the paper that we'll have to run, plus there will be two days of open house at times to be announced."

Continued Sheriff Mason: "This money will be used to buy vehicles, equipment, pay for drug prevention programs, training, etc."

Union County detectives also aided the neighboring Towns County Sheriff's Office in an investigation that led to the May 10 arrest of Samuel Dwayne Hedden, 63, of Hiwassee.

Numerous drug purchases were made during the course of the undercover investigation, and a search warrant executed on Hedden's residence yielded a substantial quantity of drugs seized, the total street value being over \$7,000, according to Towns County investigators.

# Drug Dealer...from Page 1A

high school students and young adults who traveled from North Georgia to English Avenue specifically to purchase drugs," said U.S. Attorney Byung J. "BJay" Pak. "We are committed to working with our federal, state and local law enforcement partners to aggressively target and dismantle drug trafficking operations and to combating the devastation drug activity brings to our communities."

"Today's sentence demonstrates ATF's continued dedication to identify and arrest the individuals who commit crimes that threaten the quality of life in our neighborhoods," said ATF Special Agent in Charge Arthur Peralta. "ATF and our law enforcement partners will continue to reduce violent crime by arresting criminals, such as Douglas, who have no regard for the future of our children or for the safety of the communities in which they live."

"This conviction demonstrates the great work of law enforcement at all levels in the fight against Georgia's opioid epidemic," said Georgia Bureau of Investigation Director Vernon Keenan. "The GBI is committed to working with our local and federal partners in drug enforcement no matter where the crimes occur."

"The Union County Sheriff's Office was fortunate to be able to have played a significant part of this successful operation," said Sheriff Mack Mason. "It saddens me to see the negative affects this drug has on the young people today. I appreciate the working relations shared between the United States Attorney's Office and numerous other agencies in order to achieve a successful outcome."

According to U.S. Attorney Pak, the charges and other information presented in court:

As part of an ongoing heroin trafficking investigation in North Georgia, the Union County Sheriff's Office learned that high school students and young adults from Union County were traveling from four to six hours a week to the English Avenue neighborhood of Atlanta to purchase heroin from an individual known as "Dre" – later identified as Derrick Douglas.

Investigators confirmed that Douglas was selling between one half to a gram of heroin to each of his young customers at a cost of \$100 to \$150 dollars. Investigators determined that most of Douglas' identified customers were younger than 21 years old, and at least one of them was a minor.

Douglas knew that many of these young people returned to Union County to distribute the heroin. Douglas was arrested on June 23, 2017.

In or around September 2016 through June 23, 2017, he distributed more than 80 grams of heroin to these young people.

On Jan. 25, 2017, he also sold fentanyl to an undercover officer employed by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

Derrick Douglas, aka "Dre", 31, of Atlanta, has been sentenced to five years in prison to be followed by six years of supervised release. Douglas pleaded guilty on Nov. 29,

2017, to conspiracy to sell heroin to individuals under 21 years old.

This case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Atlanta Police Department, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Laurel R. Boatright prosecuted the case.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta recommends parents and children learn about the dangers of drugs at the following web site: [www.justthinktwice.gov](http://www.justthinktwice.gov).

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**HOSPITAL PROGRAM**  
*Helping Enhance Access to Rural Treatment*

### Act now to save on taxes

Many tax payers were dismayed when the Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017 passed. It limited the deduction for State and Local Tax (SALT) to a combined total of \$10,000. Those who itemize their deductions and whose SALT exceeds \$10,000 would lose a significant tax deduction.

However, right now Georgia income tax payers have a means of preserving some, if not all of this deduction. Under a law signed by Governor Deal on May 2, 2018, you can reduce your state income taxes by \$1 for every \$1 you contribute to Rural Hospital Organizations (RHOs). When you make this contribution, it is deductible on your Federal return as a

Charitable Contribution.

The law goes into effect on July 1, 2018. We believe this program will be very popular with taxpayers and the \$60 million statewide cap will be reached very quickly. It's important that you instruct Georgia HEART (the organization that administers the program) ([www.georgiaHEART.org](http://www.georgiaHEART.org)) to submit a post-June 30 tax credit pre-approval application to the Georgia Department of Revenue.

For more information on to take advantage of this tax savings opportunity, contact John R. Day with Day & Ennis, LLC located in Blairsville, GA. Call 706-400-5763 to set-up your tax savings today.