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to set up meetings so far in advance," said Lovell. "We can work more efficiently to do better as a team, because we are all here in one location."

Many of the organization's board members and supporters gathered at the Central Office on Sept. 29 to appreciate the new site and enjoy the morning with their peers.

"This project took a lot of people," said Tracy Sanford, assistant superintendent at MECHS. "We could not have this facility without everybody that put in the effort."

"We have worked on the plans for this facility for about two years, and construction started just last summer. We wanted an at-home feel so we can make sure our staff feels comfortable working in this new environment."

The organization also wanted a new central location to increase their credibility as a school system in the eyes of the public.

"A lot of our schools are in very small facilities," said Lovell. "Our Union County location is a shared building, and our White County location is two houses. When people see these locations, they are not really thinking we are an

eligible school.

"Now, we have this main facility, and hopefully that helps people understand our seriousness as a school system, and our want to help these students get where they need to be in life."

Apart from being a meeting area, the new facility will also serve as a training location for the system's social workers and counselors.

"Every social worker and counselor that works with us has been trained in suicide intervention and prevention," said Lovell. "Now, we are bringing people in and we are training to make a huge difference in each student's life."

"We really want to help these troubled students and let them know we are here to make sure they thrive in their lives. They just need a group like us to be with them and assist them in their journey to graduation and overall adulthood."

The new facility will help MECHS to better implement its system goals and strategic plans, which in turn will further assist the many MECHS students in north Georgia with earning their high school diplomas.



A special ribbon-cutting ceremony during the Grand Opening of the new MECHS Central Office in Cleveland on Saturday, Sept. 29.

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Oct. 6, and Sunday, Oct. 7, with festivities beginning at 9 a.m. and lasting until 5 p.m. each day.

The festival brings vendors and live entertainment for attendees to enjoy as they mingle and browse everything the festival has to offer.

Live entertainment

includes young Nealy Webster, Obadiah, the K-5 Cherokee Indian Drama, the Spit Fire Cloggers from Dahlonega, Back in Grace Gospel Group, Rewind Oldies Music, and the Woody Gap Band of Steel.

"Each vendor offers their handmade goods, and they bring a variety of art, jewelry and other crafts that are not made anywhere else," said Annette Gooch, who volunteers with the festival. "Everything we have at the festival is real work from the vendors. We tried to make sure nothing there can be bought in stores."

Saturday morning will feature the ever-popular Run Above the Clouds 5K and 10K races, which serve as the kickoff event for the entire festival.

This run has many inclines and slopes for those who want to try a challenging course, and it begins at 9 a.m. at the Suches Community Center across from Woody Gap School.

"The Run Above the Clouds offers 10K and 5K road races over a beautifully scenic, challenging out-and-back course through the North Georgia mountains," according to RunAboveTheClouds.org. "There is also a 1-mile Fun Run & Dog Jog, over a mostly flat course."

Saturday also holds a nighttime square dance, where attendees can enjoy music while they dance with their family and friends.

Tickets for the dance can be purchased for \$5 on the field during the festival on Saturday, or they can be purchased at the door for \$7, and children under 12 get in free.



It rained some last year, but that didn't stop folks from attending the ever-popular Indian Summer Festival in Suches.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Live auctions will be available both days of the festival where people can bid on a variety of goods donated by vendors and others.

All of the proceeds from the event go to the Woody Gap School to help senior students with scholarship funds and to keep the sports programs supplied.

"We are there to help the school," said Larry Wood, president of the Woody Gap Sports Club, which sponsors the festival. "It is all about the kids, and we want to do anything in our capacity to help them get the things they need."

"We helped them get new uniforms, and helped the school form the cross country team. Not all students are fortunate enough to get college fully paid off, so we want to help them by giving them scholarship money that comes from the festival proceeds."

Woody Gap has three graduating seniors this year, and all are very likely to get scholarship funding from this year's festival.

"Last year, we wanted the students to understand how much the Sports Club does for them, and we wanted the Sports Club to know how much we appreciate them," said Woody Gap School Principal Carol Knight. "We got the leaders and officers of the club to come to the school so we could let them know how much they do to help our students, and how much we appreciate the work they do to provide for the students. They are involved in so many of the things we do."

For more information on the festival and the activities, visit www.suches.com/festivalinfo.htm#.



Carter still on the run; GBI continues to follow up on leads

By Shawn Jarrard
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Crystal LeAnne Carter of Hiawassee has been on the run for nearly a month following a Sept. 8 shooting in which authorities have charged her with attempted murder and aggravated assault.

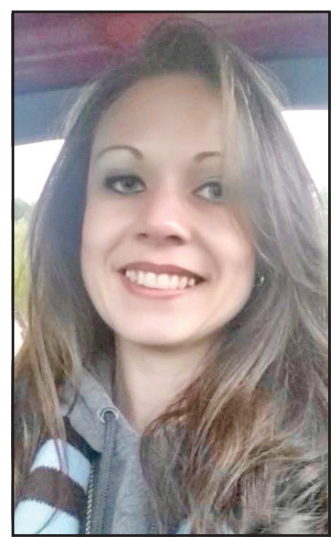
And though the Georgia Bureau of Investigation is continuing to run down leads concerning her whereabouts, she had yet to be apprehended as of press time Monday.

The latest information made public by authorities regarding the whereabouts of Carter, 37, indicated that she may be hiding out in Athens, though this information is going on two weeks old.

As previously reported, shortly after the alleged shooting incident, GBI investigators joined the Towns County Sheriff's Office in the hunt for Carter.

She is known to have ties in Union County and Clay County, North Carolina, and her Facebook page lists her as a graduate of Union County High School.

Anyone with information has been asked to call 911, and



Crystal LeAnne Carter

people are being advised not to approach Carter, as she is considered armed and dangerous, according to the Sheriff's Office.

The search for Carter stems from an incident alleged to have occurred the evening of Saturday, Sept. 8, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Deputies responded to Chatuge Regional Hospital in reference to a male subject who was brought to the hospital with a bullet wound to the chest, according to the Sheriff's

Office.

The subject was airlifted to another medical facility with a trauma center, according to the Sheriff's Office.

After dropping him off at Chatuge Regional Hospital, Carter left in the male subject's Chevrolet Tahoe, according to the Sheriff's Office.

The vehicle was discovered later that night, abandoned in the parking lot of the Marathon station on Georgia 75 North in Hiawassee, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Detectives determined that Carter left the Marathon station in her own red Ford pickup, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Her truck was located on Sunday, Sept. 9, at a residence in Clay County, North Carolina, and investigators believe Carter could be hiding out in the area of Hiawassee and Hayesville, North Carolina, and now, Athens, Georgia.

The male subject survived the shooting and has been recovering at home, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Updates to this story will be published to nganews.com as they occur.