

Clinton's logic about drug arrests and the local crime rate is simple and fact-based. Drug busts often times lead to the recovery of stolen property and more often than not, help investigators close the books on unsolved burglaries.

Currently, sheriff's deputies and investigators continue to work long hours to solve a string of thefts in the Bald Mountain Park community, Sheriff Clinton said.

Sheriff Clinton said that the residents of Towns County deserve to raise their children in a drug-free community and that he and his deputies will continue to work tirelessly to make that a reality.

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sponded to a 911 call regarding a gunshot victim.

The gunshot victim was shot prior to law enforcement's arrival, according to a release by Sheriff Clinton.

After local law enforcement arrived, multiple shots were fired resulting in a police vehicle being struck, as well as a pickup truck being driven by the brother of the gunshot victim. A YHC Campus officer was sent to a local emergency room for medical treatment of a minor injury and was later released.

A GBI forensic investigation will determine who was responsible for the shooting incident after law enforcement officers arrived at the scene.

Two men, Larry Shook, 52, and Terrence Shook, 25, both of Young Harris, were arrested and charged with obstruction of law enforcement officers in relation to the incident.

One minute the young girl was playing in the yard being a kid and tossing a ball and the next minute she was gone, Sheriff Clinton said.

"Something like this, well, it's not supposed to happen to our little babies," he said. "It's an absolute tragedy."

Towns County Coroner Ricky Mathis referred all questions about the incident to Sheriff Clinton. The sheriff said the investigation should soon be completed by his investigators.

No additional details were available at press time.

on its proposed service delivery area amendments.

The city's service delivery strategy amendments have been submitted to the commissioner and to the Towns County Water & Sewer Authority, Stancil told council members.

Stancil said that he has advised Commissioner Kendall, the water & sewer authority and the Towns County Industrial Development Authority that the city needs financial assistance to provide any expansion or improvement in the city's capacity at its sewer plant.

According to recent city council meeting minutes, the city council has instructed the mayor, city manager and the city attorney that no sewer service can be provided in the county until the city receives financial assistance.

The lone exception to this point has been the city's willingness to help bring Lowe's to Towns County to aid in job creation.

Commissioner Kendall said that he can't commit Towns County taxpayer dollars to projects that the county has no say so or control in.

"We can't commit money if we can't have some say in where the sewer capacity is used," Kendall said.

To date, the city's service delivery strategy amendments would give the city total control of future water and sewer improvements with lo-

cal taxpayers footing the bill and having no say in where the sewer services are used.

Because of the disagreements, city leaders now say that they will need to allocate or assign the remaining sewer capacity reserves within the city for future growth in Hiawassee.

Also, according to city council meeting minutes, the city's permit to expand its sewer plant ends this year. Due to failure to receive financial support, the city cannot apply for additional grant funding. The city believes it can receive up to 70 percent funding of expansion costs at its sewer plant.

Because of the lack of cooperation from the county, the water & sewer authority and the Towns County Industrial Development Authority, city leaders also say that they can't provide commercial sewer services within the county including the industrial park without sewer plant expansion.

City Manager Stancil says that the water & sewer authority has advised the city that it will build its own water and sewer plant within the county.

Stancil says that city staff has recommended the termination of any expansion of county sewer services in light of the water & sewer authority's announcement.

"There has to be some sort of compromise," Kendall said. "That's what this meeting is all about."

Park. Donaldson began by offering some of his own personal history in law enforcement and the military. He said that in collaboration with Sheriff Chris Clinton, they have prosecuted 45 drug cases in Towns County.

Donaldson said drugs, burglaries, and thefts are intertwined in a family tree of crime. He also included the weak economy and job layoffs have contributed to rising crime rates. "Crime watches in our neighborhood are the best crime deterrent we have today," he said.

Donaldson stressed that neighbors need to communicate with one another. "Do you know your neighbor's cars," he asked. "How many people here tell neighbors when they will be out of town?"

Donaldson said there are burglaries presently happening in other parts of the county. He told the association if they commit to a Neighborhood Watch, he would attend monthly meetings to discuss their progress.

Donaldson told the association members to call the police if they see something suspicious, but not to confront suspicious persons themselves. When it comes to being the victim of a brutal crime,

Donaldson was very clear: "You do not want that in your life."

The association members said they appreciated the extra patrols in the area.

One woman worried that too many phone calls to the police would be like crying wolf. Donaldson said word would get around the neighborhood pretty quickly if citizens started calling the police about suspicious activities. "Never ever hesitate to call us, please," he said.

Donaldson's humorous and enthusiastic presentation left the members feeling relaxed enough to ask questions at the end. His presentation was part sales pitch, part motivational speech, and part testimonial. He assured the crowd that the police would provide them with protection and anonymity. Donaldson's presentation, in part, helped give the members confidence to believe a Neighborhood Watch could work in Bald Mountain Park.

By the end of Donaldson's speech, Shute announced that eleven association members had signed up to volunteer for the Neighborhood Watch program.

"I will give you everything I got to make this succeed," said Donaldson.