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also in the process.”

Hall, 46, was arrested that evening and charged with felony trafficking, according to the sheriff’s office.

Two other individuals were arrested in connection with the bust: Troy Hall, 43, of Riceville, Tennessee, charged with felony trafficking and illegal possession of a controlled substance; and Melinda Smullen, 54, of Niota, Tennessee, charged with felony trafficking.

The two Halls are brother and sister, according to the sheriff’s office.

Janice Hall hails from South Georgia, and investigators believe she was acting as a drug mule for a bigger operation, bringing meth in large quantities from Atlanta into Union County, before moving it into Tennessee and potentially other Southeastern states.

“We had no idea we would find this quantity of meth off of the intelligence that we had from it,” said Union County Sheriff Mack Mason. “It wasn’t destined for Union County to be distributed here, so when we got there, it was a pleasant surprise to find this, to be able to take it off the street.”

The origins and foiled final destination of the 6 kilos of meth are still under investigation, according to the sheriff’s office.

Meth is big business for those pushing drugs on the street, as a single gram can go for as much as \$120, according to the sheriff’s office.

The word “kilo” is short for kilogram, so 6 kilos are equal to 6 kilograms, or 6,000 grams. Using an average street value of \$100 per gram, the detectives stopped approximately \$600,000 worth of meth from being distributed throughout the Southeast and beyond.

According to Georgia Law, the penalty for being found guilty for possessing

more than 400 grams of meth is “a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of 25 years,” which is accompanied by a \$1 million fine.

“The message to the people dealing illicit drugs in this county or using them is the same as always,” said Sheriff Mason. “We might not get you today, we might not get you tomorrow, or even this month or year, but we’ll get you sooner or later.”

“Your little thug buddies that you run with and think

you’re in business with will help bring you down. So, either get out of the business, get out of Union County, or go to jail. Choose one of those three.”

Added Sheriff Mason: “These drug dealers have no concern for the wellbeing of people. They just want to make that quick dollar.”

“Good people with good minds make extremely bad choices and mistakes (in trying drugs), and it could lead to their deaths, as we have seen in the past. So, at all cost, people need to flee from it.”

The previous largest meth seizure by the UCSO Narcotics

Division occurred in 2014 with the arrest of Gary Payne, who was in possession of about 500 grams of meth, which is less than one-tenth the size of this recent bust, according to the sheriff’s office.

In September 2017, UCSO investigators took part in a multiagency takedown of a multimillion dollar meth operation being perpetrated by nonlocal individuals in Suches. At the time, state and federal law enforcement agents confiscated 15 kilos of meth at the Suches lab.

## Early Voting...from Page 1A

Both the Republican and Democratic parties have candidates running in the July 24 Primary Runoff Election.

L.S. “Casey” Cagle is facing off against Brian Kemp in a bid for the Republican nomination for governor ahead of the Nov. 6 General Election.

In the May 22 General Primary, statewide, Cagle received 39.01 percent of the vote to Kemp’s 25.55 percent.

Neither candidate received a majority of the vote in May – meaning 50 percent plus one – which forced the runoff.

Whoever wins this runoff race will go head to head in November with Democratic nominee for governor Stacey

Abrams, who won her primary election in May.

Also in the July 24 runoff race, Geoff Duncan and David Shafer each are vying for the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor.

Statewide, Shafer received 48.91 percent of the vote to Duncan’s 26.65 percent in the primary, necessitating a runoff election to decide the victor.

The winner of this race will face Democratic nominee for lieutenant governor Sarah Riggs Amico in November.

For Secretary of State, David Belle Isle is in a runoff election against Brad Raffensperger for the Republican nomination.

Statewide, Raffensperger

received 34.96 percent of the vote to Belle Isle’s 28.54 percent in May, which is why the two are in a runoff for the nomination.

Whoever wins this race on July 24 will face Democratic nominee for secretary of state Josh Barrow on Nov. 6.

The only Democrats who will appear in the July 24 Democratic Primary Election Runoff are Sid Chapman and Otha E. Thornton Jr. for state school superintendent.

Statewide, Thornton received 43.87 percent of the vote to Chapman’s 36.47 percent, and the winner of this runoff will face Republican Incumbent Richard Woods in November.

## Williams meets and greets the Movers and Shakers

By Mark Smith  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

HIAWASSEE – County Extension Agent Jacob Williams may be a young man, but he has a world of experience at his fingertips, as is evidenced by the personal history he recounted to members of the Mountain Movers and Shakers on Friday, July 13.

“I’m really very excited to be here in Towns and Union County, to be the (University of Georgia) Extension Agent up here,” said Williams.

He recently took over the local ag agent position from Melissa Mattee, who transferred to the Fulton County Extension Office

Williams was born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1991. He’s the son of missionary parents who moved the family to Madagascar in 1995. There, they were involved in agricultural development for two years, helping farmers to become self-sustaining.

After returning to the United States for three years, the Williamses moved to North Africa in 2000, where they assisted natives with raising dairy goats. They subsequently ran an equine clinic, and finally, a cow dairy operation.

He attended a private Christian school while in North Africa and graduated high school in 2010.

It was there, during the 10 years his family lived across the ocean, that Williams became interested in using agriculture to benefit people.

“That’s why I really like extension, because that’s what the goal of the extension is, to use agriculture to try to help people use the resources they have the best they can,” said Williams. “That’s part of my job here, what I try to do.”

One summer in North Africa, Williams said he and a friend rented about two and a half acres of land and farmed it.

The two did everything



Mayor Harry Baughn of Hayesville, North Carolina, speaking with the Mountain Movers and Shakers on July 13.

Photo by Mark Smith

by hand – no farm tractor, no implements. They used a pair of oxen to plow, and they seeded, fertilized and weeded by hand.

It was difficult work, but his personal toils that summer allowed him to experience firsthand the harshness of the local farmers’ lives, who worked

that hard all year round.

His interest in agriculture thoroughly sparked, Williams got his bachelor’s degree in agronomy and soils from Auburn University in December 2014, after which he immediately set out to earn his master’s degree, which he achieved in 2016.

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