

Dollar...from Page 1A

er contacted Union County Sheriff's Office personnel and made a traffic stop at North Georgia Technical College, Sgt. Osborn said.

Mitchell told authorities without being prompted that he had indeed robbed the Dollar General Store, Sgt. Osborn said.

"We call that a spontaneous utterance," Sgt. Osborn said.

The gun Mitchell used was a gas-operated BB gun, that closely resembled a semi-automatic handgun, Sgt. Osborn said.

Following a thorough investigation by the Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigation Division, Mitchell was arrested and charged with crimes related to the Dollar General Store robbery, Sgt. Osborn said.

"Mr. Mitchell gave investigators a full confession," Sgt. Osborn said.

Regardless of Mitchell's confession, the case remains under investigation, Sgt. Osborn said.

Union County sheriff's investigators began working to solve the armed robbery of



the Dollar General Store at the Old Blue Ridge Highway and Kiutuestia Creek Road shortly after the robbery was reported.

The robbery occurred at 8:25 p.m., on Monday, Dec. 8, Union County Sheriff's Detective Tom Mangifesta said.

Mitchell was armed with what appeared to be a semi-automatic handgun, Det. Mangifesta said.

The suspect, later identified as Mitchell, was last

seen running around the side of the store with the cash drawer, following the robbery, Det. Mangifesta said.

Investigators searched the residence where Mitchell was living after he was stopped on Dec. 11. Mitchell was cooperative, and told investigators where he had disposed of the cash drawer on Pleasant Hill Road.

Mitchell later took investigators to the location where he dumped the cash

drawer, Sgt. Osborn said.

Sgt. Osborn said Officer Walker did some good old fashioned police work.

"It takes a smart officer to not engage a suspect in a crowded venue," Sgt. Osborn said. "Officer Walker took an armed robbery suspect into custody without incident."

No further details were available at press time. The case remains under investigation.

Barton...from Page 1A

County for their confidence in me during my eight years as a member of the Union County Board of Education."

Barton elected not to seek a third term on the Board of Education long before 2014 arrived.

"I was torn, but, in the end, I elected to spend more time with my family," she said. "I'm proud to have served. I'm proud to have contributed to one of the best school systems in the state of Georgia."

Barton praised the school system.

"We've got a school system where everybody wants to come here," she said. "I ran because I wanted to be a part of this process. I wanted to be a working part of my community and make a difference."

"Serving the community is really the part that I'm going to miss," she said. "Taking care of the kids is the main part of this whole process."

Barton had mixed feelings about not seeking reelection.

"I had a lot of mixed feelings about it," she said. "The time had come to spend more time with my family;

to spend more time with my grandchildren. However, I'll never regret anything that I did on this board. I was a part of change and this board made things happen. I'm most proud of that."

The remaining board members recognized Barton, and fellow Board member John Strickland for their years of service and dedication.

Both Barton and Strickland received plaques of appreciation for their years of service and dedication to the Board of Education.

"It has been an honor

to work with these two dedicated individuals," Board Chair Gary Davenport said. "It truly has been an honor to serve with you and know that you helped make a difference in the lives of Union County's school children."

Barton said that she will continue to lobby for making Union County's Board of Education a non-partisan board.

"I've been advocating that for as long as anyone would listen," she said. "I'll keep that fight going until some day, the right decision is made."

Strickland...from Page 1A

conservative, and I did my best to watch how we spend money."

Strickland, who serves as the vice chairman of the Board of Education, said he was ecstatic that the Board didn't have to borrow money for bonds following the successful ESPLOST that funds capital projects.

"Being a conservative, I was most happy about

that," Strickland said. "Overall, this is a real good group (BOE members) to work with. The past four years have really been an education."

In 2010, Strickland first arrived on the Board after defeating BOE Incumbent Democrat Chris Kelley, to start what many believe was a Republican revolution in Union County.

Strickland, a staunch Republican, lost his District 4 BOE seat to political newcomer Keith Potts by 47 votes. Potts, also a Republican, collected 1,309 votes to Strickland's 1,262. The loss was a setback for Strickland, but, when the dust settled, he was a happy man again.

"At first I was sad that I had lost the election," Strickland said. "Today, I'm happy I lost the election because my wife and I need to travel. We put it off for four years while I was on the Board."

"In hindsight, I'll spend the next four years as a happy man, traveling with my wife and enjoying life," he said. "Don't get me wrong, I'll be back here with the Board in a citizen capacity. I'll still keep my eyes on the purse strings, I'll just be doing that from a different vantage point."

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