

Carry class back by popular demand

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Interested in starting a gun club/shooting range in Union County?

On July 10, 2017, starting at 6 p.m., you will get your chance to organize the effort.

The Union County Sheriff's Office will sponsor a Firearms Conceal & Carry Class. The class is open to the public and free of charge. The actual class will start at 6 p.m. and last until 7:15 p.m. Following a brief intermission, the organizational meeting for the gun club/shooting range will begin at 7:30 p.m., Union

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Union County Sheriff Mack Mason



UCSO Deputy Billy Purcell

County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

This event will be held at the Haralson Memorial Civic Center at 165 Wellborn St. in Blairsville.

In addition to the class,

"We have two ladies' groups that will represent 'The Well-Armed Woman' and 'Women on Target,'" Sheriff Mason said. "After the carry class is completed at 7:15 p.m., there will be a 15-minute intermission. At 7:30 p.m., those interested in organizing a gun club and developing a shooting range are encouraged to stay.

"The gun club/shooting range effort must be organized in order to get it underway," Sheriff Mason said. "This county has many thousands of acres of U.S. Forest Service land, and we would hope to acquire a tract such as the one in Cherokee County, North Carolina, and in Towns County utilized by gun clubs in those counties."

Sheriff Mason asks that those interested should attend the after-hours meeting.

"Let's do more than just talk about getting us a place to shoot," he said. "The Union County Sheriff's Office is required by law to qualify

shooting twice yearly, and we don't even have a place for the county sheriff's office to shoot. A shooting range will be of benefit to both law enforcement and civilians."

The concealed carry class is open to the public, and all active duty law enforcement officers are invited. There will be one hour of P.O.S.T. credit for all active duty law enforcement officers who attend. This will also be a great opportunity to meet and interact with your local law enforcement personnel.

The training will be conducted by Staff Sgt. Billy Purcell of the Union County Sheriff's office. Sgt. Purcell has more than 30 years of law enforcement experience, including as a Georgia P.O.S.T. certified instructor with Firearms and Defensive Tactics as his major course of instruction.

The sergeant was a senior instructor from 1986 to 2010 at Abraham Baldwin Agriculture College Police Academy, and he was the assistant director of the Academy from 2002 to 2010.

Staff Sgt. Purcell has a degree in Criminal Justice and has graduated from the Professional Management Program, Command College and the prestigious Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Academy 159th Session.

In addition to his law enforcement service and education, he was one of the few officers selected to travel to Israel and serve as a Law Enforcement Exchange Officer.

This July 10 class is the same class that was taught last year on two occasions.

The invitation for this community event is open to the public. The training will cover dos and don'ts for concealed carry and provide you an overview of how you can legally defend yourself and your property as a citizen.

Sheriff Mason said feel free to come to one or both meetings, the class and the meeting afterward.

No firearm is required. The Sheriff's Office will be looking forward to seeing you there.