

## ***HENSON WINS SOLICITOR'S AWARD FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT EXCELLENCE IN CHEROKEE COUNTY***

Jimmy Henson doesn't make many arrests but he still has a huge impact on the local court system.

The veteran Cherokee County sheriff's deputy is the department's one-person crime scene investigator and evidence custodian. On a near daily basis, Henson collects fingerprints, foot sole impressions, photography and other key pieces of evidence to build strong criminal cases.

Henson's workload includes everything from burglaries to homicide, armed robbery to sexual assaults. He was one of the lead investigators in the 2002 case that landed Jonathan Binney on Death Row for the murder conviction of a local woman. He worked the July 2004 murder case where Arthur Shane Beck of North Carolina received a life prison sentence for the murder of a convenience store clerk in the parking lot of his workplace. He has also been involved in the investigation of the 2004 Cherokee County Courthouse fire and the 2005 murder investigation of a Blacksburg convenience store clerk killed in his workplace.

Henson's commitment to his profession over his 27-year career earned him the 2006 Solicitor's Award for Cherokee County Enforcement Excellence. Henson accepted the award during Solicitor Trey Gowdy's annual law enforcement appreciation dinner at the Broad River Electrical Cooperative. His prize package includes a commemorative plaque, a certificate to drive a new BMW for a weekend and a \$75 gift certificate to Abby's Grill in Spartanburg. He will be offered a limousine ride to his Spartanburg outing.

A committee of police officers from several departments nominated and named the winner.

"There is no better compliment than the recognition of your peers," Solicitor Trey Gowdy said. "Jimmy makes a difficult job look easy. We count on him to collect the evidence needed to identify and convict criminals."

Henson's co-workers credit him with single-handedly building their agency's state-of-the-art facility. The local facility allows for expedited testing on items that were once transported to other labs for time-consuming tests.

Henson was one of five officers recognized at the dinner. Gaffney police Sgt. Mike Segina, Highway Patrol Cpl. BJ Albert, SLED Agent Lt. Dewitt "Spike" McCraw and Al Phillips of the Blacksburg Police Department were recognized for their contributions to their respective agencies.

Segina, a 13-year veteran, is the department's arson investigator, training officer, evidence custodian and crime scene investigator. He served as a patrol officer prior to being promoted to his current position.

Albert, a 12-year veteran of the Highway Patrol, supervises a team of troopers that strives to reduce traffic fatalities through the aggressive enforcement of traffic laws. Albert is also a member of the South Carolina National Guard.

Phillips, a Newark, NJ native, has been a member of the Blacksburg Police Department since 1999. He is the department's representative on the Cherokee County Metro Narcotics Team. Prior to becoming a police officer, Phillips was a decorated member of the US Marine Corp.

McCraw has been a supervisor in SLED's Piedmont region for seven years and he has been an active member of the organization for 21 years. Local police officers often call McCraw for interviewing assistance and telephone number research.

Generous donations by some community leaders helped make the dinner a success. The donor list includes Abby's Grill, Associates Bookkeeping & Tax Service, Bill Mason Enterprises, Blakely Funeral Home, BMW, Brooks Brothers, Burns Chevrolet Chrysler Dodge Jeep, Carolina Panthers, Charlotte Bobcats, Daddy Joe's, Elite Limousine, Fatz Café, Herbie Famous Fireworks, Inc., Holly Grove Catering, Hollywood Productions, M & W Clearing & Grading, Nestle USA, The Herald-Journal, Prime Outlets, Upstate Carolina Medical Center and WYFF.

"I appreciate the community's willingness to support such a worthy cause," Gowdy said. "Police officers and their families richly deserve a night of rest and relaxation for the many sacrifices they make to keep Cherokee County safe."