



Christmas pageants and more: holiday events fill the calendar

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Spirit of community support endures through all seasons

The season of giving spans every day of every year for so many organizations engaged in the Madison County community. Efforts throughout the year from both hard-working employees and dedicated volunteers underscore the caring and commitment to address issues impacting individuals and families across the county.

The inside pages of this edition profile just some of the people, projects and programs that serve the community. Turn to page 6 and 7 to learn more about local organizations taking on the challenges facing residents and find out how you can contribute to – and get involved with – their missions to serve.



Volunteers at the Beacon of Hope organize food for distribution to residents in need. The Marshall nonprofit serves roughly 500 individuals and families every month. PAUL EGGERS/THE NEWS-RECORD & SENTINEL



A food distribution the Wednesday before Thanksgiving has grown into a tradition that sees volunteers collect and deliver over 100 holiday feasts to families in every corner of the county. COURTESY PHOTO



The Community Housing Coalition of Madison County brings together volunteers and resources from across the county to address the housing needs of local residents. PAUL EGGERS/THE NEWS-RECORD & SENTINEL



Madison County school and law enforcement officials address threats in school, on social media

Paul Eggers
The News-Record & Sentinel
USA TODAY NETWORK

A Madison High School student faces a disorderly conduct charge after allegedly stating that he would “shoot up the school.” According to arrest warrants, Mitchell Jay Ball, 18, said during lunch inside the school Nov. 20 that he was not “going for specific people” and that he was “going for numbers.”

Court documents state that after a student relayed the statements to school administrators Nov. 26, Madison County Sheriff’s Office deputies performed a search at Ball’s Marshall home and recovered three guns: a model 1942 7.62x59 caliber rifle, a .22 caliber rifle and a 12-gauge shot gun.

Ball had said he “had a date in mind for December 11 or 12” and that he does “already have weapons,” according to warrants.

After posting a \$20,000 bond Nov. 27, Ball was released from custody inside the Madison County Jail. His release order states he is not to “own, possess, have care and custody of, or associate with anyone owning” any kind of firearm. He is also barred from being on the grounds of any school building or school event anywhere in North Carolina.

His release order also states that the weapons seized from his home will remain with the Madison County Sheriff’s Office until the case is closed.

Madison County School officials would not discuss Ball’s arrest, citing federal law regarding student matters.

School safety threats

A statement from superintendent Will Hoffman dated Nov. 28 said “we take student safety very seriously and work hand-in-hand with law enforcement anytime a serious issue arises.” In a phone interview, Hoffman said the district’s school safety plan, which includes full-time school resource officers at all public schools, is the “platinum standard.”

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Madison County outlines public health priorities

Focus on substance use, mental health and nutrition continues

Paul Eggers
The News-Record & Sentinel
USA TODAY NETWORK

With the new year fast approaching, resolution season is coming into full swing. Just as individuals may consider areas to improve in the year ahead, Madison County health officials are charting a course to overcome the biggest barriers to a healthier community.

Public health officials joined community members Nov. 15 inside the Cooper-



A countywide focus on substance use laid the groundwork for the launch of a new drug court program in Madison County. COURTESY

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