



## Fayette County Sheriff's Office

Barry H. Babb, Sheriff **November 3, 2014**

### Press Information

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On Saturday night November 1, 2014 at 9:23pm a deputy on patrol initiated a traffic stop of a 2011 silver Chevrolet Aveo occupied by three individuals on Highway 138 near the Fayette/Clayton county line. The vehicle fled from the officer onto Lake Ridge Parkway in Clayton County. The vehicle left the roadway and struck an embankment. The vehicle then reversed its course striking the then stopped pursuit deputy's vehicle before taking back off down Lake Ridge Parkway. The deputy was exiting her vehicle at the time of the collision to initiate an arrest. The deputy continued the pursuit into Garden Lake Apartments where the driver fled on foot as the deputy and another deputy back up unit detained the two other occupants. With assistance from Clayton County Police and Sheriff's Office and a Fayetteville Police K-9 unit the driver was located a short time later and taken into custody. The driver, Justin Parks, 24, of Riverdale was charged with Defective Taillight, Fleeing or Attempting to Elude, Failure to Maintain Lane, Reckless Driving, Open Container of Alcohol, Aggravated Assault and Convicted Felon in Possession of a Firearm. A passenger, Placido Espinoza 24, of Eatonton GA was also arrested and charged with Convicted Felon in Possession of a Firearm. The third passenger was released at the scene with no charges.

On Sunday morning November 2, 2014 at 9:09am a theft in progress was received of a utility trailer carrying two lawn mowers from 465 Benjamin Circle which is located in the central area of the county off Kenwood Road. A deputy on patrol on Westbridge Road located the vehicle matching the description occupied only by a driver leaving the county onto Highway 138 towards Union City. The deputy followed and waited for a backup deputy before initiating a traffic stop. When the deputies attempted a traffic stop the vehicle fled north on I-85. The vehicle exited onto Flat Shoals Road only to re-enter onto I-85 where the driver abandoned the moving vehicle against the center wall and fled on foot across the south bound lanes of the interstate. The runaway vehicle came to rest safely on the side of the interstate. Deputies pursued the suspect on foot into the BP Station at 3805 Flat Shoals Road where the suspect hid in the restroom. The suspect, Markus Johnson 32, of Riverdale was taken into custody without further incident and was charged with Driving without a Valid License, Drugs/Use/Possession Related Objects, Theft by Taking, Possession of Tools during Commission of a Crime and Criminal Trespass. Johnson is already had outstanding warrants for traffic charges in Clayton County, Violation of Parole and felony theft in Spalding County. Johnson may also be involved in similar thefts in Union City.

"Each pursuit we engage in has to be evaluated for safety. In both of these cases the perpetrators did not reach high speeds and were short lived and traffic, especially pedestrians, were not a factor. The Johnson pursuit was initiated in Fulton County hence our lack of being able to charge him with traffic charges. The deputies did a great job of being vigilant and safe for themselves and those around them. Also, we appreciate the help from Clayton PD and SO, Fayetteville PD and Union City PD. We really appreciate the teamwork we have in this area."