

EMC...from Page 1A

the terms, the EMC Board of Directors will pursue legal options, according to the documents.

According to the documents obtained by the newspaper, the only board member who knew about Taylor's debt was Taylor himself. Nevertheless, BRMEMC's administration knew about the debt and kept it secret from the board of directors, according to the documents.

Nine days before the *North Georgia News* first published the story of Taylor's debt, the EMC Board of Directors reprimanded BRMEMC General Manager Matthew Akins. However, Akins remains as GM of the cooperative because board members acknowledged that he had inherited the debt situation from the previous administration, according to the

documents.

However, there's another debt, according to documents obtained by the newspaper BRMEMC loaned Taylor money to pay for equipment designed to lower his electric usage.

He owes \$62,354 on that loan. That leaves a balance of \$107,998.43 owed to the cooperative, according to the documents, which includes 1.5 percent interest on a monthly basis.

Taylor also must keep his current electric usage paid up to date, the document shows.

Taylor resigned as president of the Board of Directors on April 17. The EMC Board appointed Julie Payne

to serve Taylor's unexpired term on the board of directors for Towns County.

BRMEMC Board Vice President, Lenny Parks of Suches, is the acting board chair for the nine-member board.

Meanwhile, the financial aftermath of Taylor's debt doesn't stop there. The BRMEMC Board has hired an attorney, Steve Minor of Tisinger Vance, PC to determine how the debt happened in the first place. That investigation will cost the membership up to \$30,000.

Minor is no stranger to EMCs having assisted cooperatives in areas that include the revision of bylaws and policies, appeals of ad va-

lorem tax assessments, and conducting board meetings, member meetings, and other public meetings.

It's unclear how long Taylor's bill has been overdue, overlooked and gone unpaid. That information should come from Minor's investigation into the debt.

The utility company has more than 43,000 customers with more than 49,000 electric meters serving a five-county area that includes Union, Towns, and Fannin counties in Georgia and Clay and Cherokee counties in North Carolina.

The election of a new president of the Board of Directors is expected to take place in September.

Bust...from Page 1A

Payne was arrested July 25 as investigators seized more than 1 pound of methamphetamine following an executed search warrant at his residence, jail records show.

The street value of the methamphetamine is approximately \$65,000, Sheriff Mason said.

The investigation and bust led by Union County



Above, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason and seized vehicles; below the haul from a methamphetamine bust.

sheriff's Sgt. Tyler Miller and Lt. Chad Deyton, of the Union County Narcotics Division, led to the seizure of 1 pound, 2 ounces of methamphetamine, weapons, vehicles and almost \$11,000 in cash, Sheriff Mason said.

Detectives Miller and Deyton worked countless hours on the case, and with the use of a confidential informant, concluded the investigation with Payne's arrest, Sheriff Mason said.

"We're in the process of filing seizure papers on various articles of property that include cash, weapons, vehicles and land," Sheriff Mason said. "Rough total estimates to be seized is around \$400,000."

The case remains under investigation, Sheriff Mason said.

"We are in a war on drugs," Sheriff Mason said. "Everyone has heard that term used for a long time, but some still may not know or understand the reasoning behind it."

"One can just take a look at the weekly jail report from Union County in our local newspaper for many reasons for this ongoing fight," Sheriff Mason said. "You can see people arrested for burglaries, thefts and fraud of all types as desperate people addicted to these drugs and dangerous substances go to all extremes in their frantic search for money to buy their

next fix or high to get them by for another few hours.

"Rarely are these people first timers, as most are repeat offenders continually causing grief and problems for people they steal from just to satisfy that chemical monster demanding to be fed," Sheriff Mason said. "Most of us personally know people or families directly affected by a person using drugs. Many times that person is a family member, and we can recount the drastic change in that person from the time they started using drugs."

"People who were formerly hard-working, honorable and trustworthy, are suddenly found to be profoundly changed in personality, demeanor and even appearance. They regularly steal from and mislead even their most loved ones and even those they depend on most for life's basic necessities."

"Drug users of all types have shown they will abuse and abandon loved ones, children, good friends and jobs and whatever else as they lose more and more control over the monster raging within them."

"The people they buy from, many times are users themselves. They sell, in order to provide funds for their own addictions, and many times they accrue money from the sale, and just as likely, they take or swap drugs for property or personal belongings as other addicts do whatever they can to get their next high," Sheriff Mason said.

"As your Sheriff, I would like nothing more than to have to disband our Drug Squad because there is nothing for them to do," he said. "Unfortunately, at this time, that's not the case."

Seizures...

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Sheriff Mason said. "These monies help to offset the cost of fighting this war against drugs. By standing firm with dealers in this community, we can send a message that drug dealers, and everything they bring with them, are not welcome here."

Meters...


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get near it with a weed eater," Mayor Conley said. "If that device gets damaged, you've spent \$140. That's what it costs to replace that."

The device that looks like a hockey puck is the central intelligence device that sends information to the person collecting the usage data each month, Mayor Conley said.

"It's the main device that all the reading equipment is attached to," Mayor Conley said. "The reader just drives by the locations and watches the laptop as the information is collected. The meter reader then downloads that information onto a flash drive and brings it back to City Hall to be put in our computer system."

Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse



August 8, 2014
in memory of
Murray S. King
by Kendra H. King

**Bell ringing information
at 706-745-5493**