

YANCEY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

D. GARY BANKS SHERIFF

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For Immediate Release

03/11/2011

While I would prefer that concerns with my office or my employees be communicated to me rather than reading allegations in a newspaper, I consider any allegations made against a member of my staff a serious matter.

Based upon an eleventh hour reporter's inquiry at a time when I was not in my office and the next day a story in the March 10, 2011 issue of "Yancey County News," I have taken certain actions. The gun with the serial number reported in the newspaper has been given to me by an officer and is locked up in the department. At this time, while I can neither confirm nor deny many of the allegations or statements made in the newspaper, because the story alleges criminal misconduct and involves personnel matters, I cannot make any statements at this time except for this Release.

I have placed the employee on administrative leave pending an investigation which will include an inventory of departmental property in addition to other matters. In obedience to the laws and out of respect for privacy rights of individuals, I would like the public to know that any matter, including personnel decisions, are and will be handled honestly, professionally, and according to the law.

While I will discharge the duties of the office of Sheriff and supervise my staff, because a sensational headline alleges criminal misconduct, I have contacted the District Attorney to request investigation of any allegations that are determined to be credible and will cooperate with any investigation that is authorized.

I will endeavor to take appropriate action according to law and will make any further information public whenever it is possible to do so.

Gary Banks, Sheriff

Yancey County