



ASHE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff B. Phil Howell

For Immediate Release – April 20th, 2026

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High Speed Chase with Federal Fugitive Arrest

Sheriff B. Phil Howell announces the arrest of 46-year-old Jason Benfield of Laurel Springs, NC, after a dangerous pursuit beginning on Hwy 221 and ending on Hwy 16 N with an officer-assisted traffic stop.

On the evening of April 17th, 2026, Ashe County Sheriff's Office Deputies located Benfield in a white Chevrolet 3500 truck near Woodstown Road and Hwy 221. Benfield had outstanding Federal Warrants that caused deputies to be searching for him for some time now. Benfield failed to yield to the deputies' sirens and blue lights, and he then fled at speeds exceeding 120 MPH through the West Jefferson and Jefferson area. Benfield ran several red traffic lights while driving in and out of traffic, making this a very dangerous situation for the public. Law enforcement was unable to keep up, but additional officers were able to join as the vehicle continued through the towns.



West Jefferson Police, Jefferson Police, and NC State Hwy Patrol joined the Ashe County Sheriff's Office in the pursuit. When Benfield reached the intersection of Hwy 16 N, West Jefferson, Officer Graybeal was able to pull his patrol car in front of Benfield, where the suspect rammed his police car. Sgt. Hicks of the Ashe County Sheriff's Office was able to box in the suspect with his patrol car, allowing the deputies to act quickly, resulting in Benfield being detained.

Sheriff Howell would like to thank the ACSO Deputies, West Jefferson PD, Jefferson PD, NC State Hwy Patrol, and Ashe Medics for their quick response and actions while providing the highest standard of public safety.

Benfield was transported to Ashe County Memorial Hospital for a routine check and later transported to and booked at the Ashe County Detention Center on a No Bond. *In North Carolina, a no-bond means a judge has ordered that the arrested individual must remain in custody until the case is resolved or a new bond hearing is held.*

Jason Michael Benfield, 46 years old, was charged with the following:

- Felony Federal Fugitive
- 2 counts of Felony Assault on an Officer with a Deadly Weapon
- Felony Flee to Elude
- Speeding Exceeding 100 mph (NCSHP)
- Careless and Reckless Driving to Endanger (NCSHP)

ASHE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
140 LAW ENFORCEMENT DR, JEFFERSON, NC 28640

WWW.ASHESHERIFF.COM
336.846.5633
INFO@ASHESO.COM

