



ASHE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff B. Phil Howell

For Immediate Release – August 20th, 2026

Joint Narcotics Investigation Leads to Arrest

On August 14th, 2026, Darrell Payne of Sparta was arrested on the Blue Ridge Parkway during a traffic stop by members of the Blue Ridge Counter Narcotics Task Force and the Alleghany County Sheriff's Office. The traffic stop resulted in the seizure of methamphetamine, fentanyl, and two firearms.

Payne was arrested and transported to the Alleghany County Detention Center under a \$750,000 secured bond. On August 19th, 2026, Payne was transferred to the Ashe County Detention Center, where he is now under a \$950,000 secured bond. The arrest was conducted after an ongoing narcotics investigation concluded by the Blue Ridge Counter Narcotics Task Force. The Task Force consists of the Ashe County Sheriff's Office, Watauga County Sheriff's Office, Boone Police Department, North Wilkesboro Police Department, and the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation.

Darrell Payne of Sparta, NC, was arrested and charged by the Alleghany Sheriff's Office. His charges include:

- 5 Felony Counts of Trafficking in Methamphetamine
- 2 Felony Counts of Trafficking in Fentanyl
- 2 Felony Counts of Possession of a Firearm by a Felon
- Felony Possession of Methamphetamine
- Felony Possession with Intent to Manufacture, Sell, Or Deliver Methamphetamine

Ashe County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Division also charged Payne with:

- 3 Felony Counts of Trafficking Methamphetamine
- Felony Possession of a Firearm by a Felon

INTAKE PHOTO



**Darrell Johnathan
PAYNE**

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

WWW.ASHESHERIFF.COM
336.846.5633
INFO@ASHESO.COM



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