

Watauga County Sheriff's Office's Sgt. James Wesley Hawkins is this year's recipient of the Boone Optimist Club's coveted Officer of the Year award.

He had stiff competition. Also nominated were Captain Douglas Dugger of Appalachian State University Police and Master Police Officer Donnie Goodman of Boone Police Department. Hawkins is a 1998 graduate of Watauga High School who attended basic training at Caldwell Community College. He has been with the sheriff's office since 2000. Husband to Jamie and father of Abigail and Aiden, Hawkins is a canine officer who is dedicated to his profession, according to Captain Kelly Redmon.