

## Ashe entrepreneur faces assault charges

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Tuesday, 12 June 2007 19:38

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47-year-old entrepreneur Eric Hunter of Jefferson was charged with two counts of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill last week.

Two men, James Sturgill of Crumpler, and Brandon Joe Dillard of Jefferson, both members of a construction company, were reportedly looking at lots Hunter allegedly had for sale when Hunter confronted them. Hunter pulled a rifle from his vehicle and, according to reports, fired at the two men, who promptly fled into the woods. According to reports, the rifle used had a scope. Hunter was released on a \$50,000 bond. Hunter is known locally as the co-founder and chief executive officer of Next Safety, a company that produces a respirator that theoretically protects the wearer from toxins in the air. Hunter sold 477 acres on Phoenix Mountain last year for the development of a ski slope, expected to open in 2008.