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now, we have a local element that's saying the same exact thing."

Since 2010, only 4,000 people have signed up for the service, though the current population of the county is close to 22,000 residents.

The Wireless Emergency Notification System costs the county \$6,200 a year to maintain, and is run by an Ohio-based company called Inspiron Logistics, which is considered an industry leader in alert management.

"Recognizing the importance of real-time community information in a post-9/11 world, Inspiron Logistics developed the Wireless Emergency Notification System, or WENS," according to the company website.

"This system was designed to work proficiently in the event of the most extreme-case scenarios. Therefore,

ensuring a reliable method of communication at a time when it is needed most, and allowing first responders and emergency personnel to focus on aiding a fully informed community," according to the Inspiron website.

Signing up for the program can be done easily online by navigating to tinyurl.com/ucwens, at which point residents just need to complete

the form that comes up.

Union County's Emergency Management Agency office has stressed the importance of completely filling out the form to include a local address, so that localized emergency notifications can reach the proper residents.

Part-time residents signed up for the alerts who, for example, travel to Florida during the winter season, will

still get their Union County alerts – a good thing to keep out-of-county homeowners advised on what's going on near their properties.

The Union County Fire/Rescue & EMA Facebook page regularly features the WENS signup link, and the fire department hopes to see a broader utilization of the service moving forward.

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amount.

As previously reported, the agreement was going to cost the county around \$55,000, though that figure was negotiated downward just prior to the contract being finalized.

"Air Methods has been great to work with us and work with the county in giving us an unbelievably good deal, which helps save taxpayers money, plus helps save you money if you happen to be unlucky enough to need the helicopter

service. But if we do, we've got it available," said Paris.

The commissioner also accepted a settlement agreement between the county and Winter Construction Company for \$20,000 payable to Union County.

"This has to do with water leaks that the company has been unable to stop at the Community Center," said Paris. "We are in the process of having a specialty company come in and make the repair. This is a settlement we made with (Winter Construction) for that work."

Paris accepted two other agreements in the meeting, one authorizing payment to Communication Service Inc. in the amount of \$420 a month to go toward maintenance of communications equipment at 911 Dispatch.

The fourth agreement accepted by Commissioner Paris was between the county and Legacy Link, to provide the county's \$95,000 in local match monies for fiscal year 2018.

"These funds are used by the Area Agency on Aging as match to draw down the federal and state monies for administration, coordination, information and referral, employment and training of older workers and volunteer programs. This program is provided through the Union County Senior Center," said Paris.

Funds that go to the Senior Center contribute to a variety of activities and services for aging county residents, including exercise, transportation and recreational programs, plus, the Meals on Wheels program is administered through the center.

The commissioner also accepted four Accountability Court grants: Mental Health Court, \$121,736; Adult Felony Drug Court North (Union and Towns), \$223,080; Adult Felony Drug Court South (Lumpkin and White), \$214,192; and Family Drug Court, \$195,858.

Accountability Court grants are funds from the state that help those struggling with mental health and/or drug addiction by offering counseling and local intervention programs in place of jail sentences, according to the commissioner.

"The hope is that, over time, the recidivism rate will be reduced, and the cost to society, the legal system and prison system and jails will also be reduced," said Paris, who went on to note how successful the programs have been in the county.

Added Paris: "All of these courts are an effort by the state of Georgia to keep the jails and prison population down by trying to help many people back into society, where they will eventually be an asset instead of a liability to the communities."

Commissioner Paris appointed Jack Parker to the Union County Board of Assessors for a five-year term to end June 1, 2022.

After the business of the meeting had been attended to, the commissioner spoke on a few subjects of interest to those gathered.

He clarified remarks he made in the May county meeting, in which he said the 13 acres the county is purchasing from the Davenport family will be paid for using SPLOST funds.

"This was an incorrect statement I made, as the funds actually will come instead from our surplus fund balance in the county," said Paris.

The property is located adjacent the Union County Farmers Market, and will cost \$678,500.

"It will not strain this account at all, and we'll be able to replace this money hopefully with surplus funds from this year unless we have something come up that we don't anticipate," said Paris.

Commissioner Paris spoke on the many roads that have been paved in the county recently, made possible by Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant monies acquired through the Georgia Department of Transportation.

"For the year 2017, we received \$659,248 – which we're excited about –

specifically for asphalt paving and topping of roads," said Paris. "So far this year, we have paved or resurfaced Flat Rock Gap Road, Ivy Log Creek Road, Kings Road, Pearl Wright Road, Rogers Road, Parker Road, Cavender Gap Road, Dewberry Road, Earl Patterson Road, Copperhead Road and Wilmar Circle."

The local match for the LMIG funds is 30 percent, or about \$200,000, and that will be paid for with SPLOST funds, said Paris.

"This does not include the several miles of surface

treatment paving we will do with our own crews," said Paris. "We appreciate the state GDOT working with us this year, and the local GDOT office."

The July regular county meeting has been rescheduled for Tuesday, July 18, at 6 p.m.

County meetings typically take place on the third Thursday of every month at 6 p.m., though due to a conflict in the commissioner's schedule, the July meeting was moved from its July 20 date.

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trail went cold, they upped the reward for information leading to arrests from \$60,000 to \$130,000.

Fortunately, the manhunt came to an end nearly three days after it started.

Once in Tennessee, Dubose and Rowe robbed, then tied up a Shelbyville couple, who subsequently worked their way free and alerted authorities that their captors had fled in their vehicle.

Tennessee police spotted the stolen car on Interstate 24 and became engaged in a high-speed chase, as the outlaws refused to pull over and fired shots at their pursuers.

The two ended up crashing the vehicle, after which they fled into the woods, making their way to a nearby home.

There, they attempted to steal another vehicle, though the property owner came outside and discovered the fugitives, holding them at gunpoint until authorities could arrive.

The arrests ended a harrowing three-day manhunt, during which time Dubose and Rowe committed many crimes, though, thankfully, they did not take any more lives.

Investigators and deputies with the Union County Sheriff's Office stayed on alert throughout the manhunt in case the fugitives made their way to Union County.

"We got an intelligence report from the Georgia Sheriffs' Association," said UCSO Lt. Daren Osborn. "We went into mode like we

do anything else. We issued a BOLO (Be On the Look-Out) and put a notice on Facebook, that these guys had killed two officers and were on the run."

Along with the All-Points Bulletin, the sheriff's office kept its deputies up to speed on information relayed by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and Georgia Sheriffs' Association.

As of press time, it remained unknown whether the fugitives ever passed through Union County on their way to Tennessee.

And while it's appropriate now to celebrate the capture of Dubose and Rowe, it's also time to remember the fallen men who died minding the safety of their fellow Georgians.

"An officer is an officer – it doesn't matter if they're out here working patrol or they're guarding thugs like that," said Lt. Osborn. "An officer is an officer, they took an oath just like I did, and they lost their lives."

Georgia Department of Corrections Commissioner Gregory Dozier praised the efforts of all the local, state and federal law enforcement personnel and support staff who contributed to the capture of the alleged murderers.

"Over the course of the intense three-day manhunt, countless law enforcement professionals offered their assistance and resources without hesitation," said Dozier in a statement. "We are eternally grateful for their selfless service to GDC and to the citizens of this state."