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In Union County, sex offenders go directly to the UCSCO Criminal Investigations Division to register.

When a sex offender arrives, he or she must turn over their address to investigators, who in turn go out to the residence to verify that the person registering does live there, and that it is compliant with the previously mentioned distance requirement.

"And they're restricted where they can work," said Mangifesta. "They can't work at a church or a school, or for a county recreation department where there's going to be kids. They can't work at a skating rink, anything like that where kids under the age of 18 congregate, go to school or what have you."

The sheriff's office is also tasked with maintaining a list of sex offenders on its website at unioncountygasherriff.org/sex-offenders, though that portion of the site was undergoing maintenance at press time.

Residents can also search for sex offenders living in Union County at gbi.georgia.gov/georgia-sex-offender-registry.

UCSO Capt. Pat Williams maintains the sex offender records for Criminal

Investigations, and she keeps the schools up-to-date by sending them pictures and bios of newly registered sex offenders, according to Mangifesta.

"We're also tasked periodically to go out and make sure that these people are still living where they're supposed to be living and working where they're supposed to be working," said Pilote, who transferred from patrol to CID several months ago.

As for how the process works initially, Mangifesta said offenders being released from jail have to notify the state where they plan to live 45 days prior to release.

"(The state) will send an email to Capt. Williams, saying, 'This person is due to be released on this date, these are his charges. We will let you know when he's released,'" said Mangifesta. "And he has 72 hours to then go to the sheriff's office and register."

Added Mangifesta: "Once they do that, then they're required to come back once a year. Now, if they were deemed by the court to be a child predator, they have to register on their birthday and then sixth months later. So, they actually have two

registration verifications every year if they've been deemed a child predator."

Job, residence and vehicle changes also have to be reported by the offender to the sheriff's office, which in turn must be verified by those in Criminal Investigations, according to Pilote.

Overall, the process is very thorough from an investigative and registration standpoint, which is important to keep children and others safe from those who might re-offend.

For their part, UCSCO investigators remain diligent in their duties of safeguarding the public.

"It is what it is, we all have to deal with it," said Mangifesta. "The public certainly has a right to know who's living in their neighborhood, and we encourage people to go to the websites and check out and see who their neighbors are, for keeping their kids safe."

Rounding out the Union County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Division is Sgt. Lamar Dyer and Lt. Daren Osborn, and everyone in CID is certified to update Union County's sex offender registry.

Mattee...continued from Page 1A

harmful to local poultry, and is a virus that is contracted through direct contact with infected waterfowl, such as Canadian Geese, or the feces of such waterfowl.

Mattee explained that this is not contagious to humans, and should not be confused with what is commonly known as bird flu, to which humans are susceptible.

"Avian influenza, the strain that is currently being transmitted throughout Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia, this is transmitted through migrating waterfowl," said Mattee. "This is circulating, without any symptoms, in wild geese and also seagulls."

"This is a really big threat because Georgia's number one agricultural asset is poultry."

As of right now, Georgia has two recorded cases of avian influenza, both of which are in Northwest Georgia, said Mattee. And while there have been recorded instances of avian influenza outbreaks in the Southeastern United States before now, this is the first time it has spread to Georgia.

"It's transmitted through feces, that's how they get it from the waterfowl," said Mattee. "The geese will fly over, defecate on property, and then the chicken will come into contact with it or someone will track those particles into a chicken house. Those chickens will become infected and infect each other and will be dead within 24 hours."

There are no visible symptoms in the chickens that become infected, which add to the severity of the outbreak. The No. 1 indicator that a poultry stock has become infected is sudden death.

"It is a very dramatic disease and it can be devastating," said Mattee. "So, by the time you realize your flock has it, it's already been transmitted everywhere."

"In Northwest Georgia, they are starting to do screens. There are sometimes indicators that a flock is infected. Their combs start to swell up. They're a little bit tired. They

have diarrhea but, again, a lot of times it is asymptomatic."

According to Mattee, the most effective preventative method against avian influenza is caution around areas that waterfowl may have defecated.

For those who have a poultry flock, Mattee advised using a separate pair of shoes that are only to be used while tending to the flock that are kept in a contained environment away from potential infectious particles.

Also during the meeting, Mattee discussed spring gardening tips for those who wish to grow plants from seedlings rather than purchasing a mature plant.

"It's cheaper to grow from a seed," said Mattee. "Now is a good time to start doing that, if you plan on going that route."

"There are several different ways that you can start plants from seeds. There are different methods that you're going to use, depending on the different plants you're growing."

There are two methods that can be used when sowing a seed, the transplanting method or direct seed planting.

As the name suggests, direct seed planting is where the seed is planted directly into the desired spot and grown from that location.

"The bigger seeds that you get, they don't do too well with transplanting," said Mattee. "These are the seeds you'll want to use direct seed planting. Others, like tomatoes and peppers, with the smaller seeds, those will do much better with transplanting."

When using the transplanting method, the seed will first be put into a small container with seed planting mix. According to Mattee, this is a specially formulated mixture for starting seeds and is not the same as regular soil.

"It may look like dirt, but there is no soil in it," said Mattee. "This is actually really good because it allows for a lot of drainage, and if you don't have soil in it, then you don't

have any bacteria or fungus that could potentially harm the seed."

The seed will remain in the container, typically kept inside where water and sun exposure can be closely monitored, until the seed sprouts its first leaf. After the seed sprouts, the transplanting process begins.

"Once the leaves sprouts and you have the first set of leaflets, you're going to want to transfer it from the container," said Mattee. "You'll then take the seeds and put them into their own individual containers."

After the first transfer, the plant should be left to grow until it reaches 4 to 5 inches, depending on the plant. During this stage, the plant is still being heavily monitored and is typically still kept indoors or in a greenhouse.

"Before you do that final transfer into the plant's permanent location, you'll want to do something called hardening off," said Mattee. "Up until this point, you've really been babying the plant."

"So, you'll want to set them outside for a week or two and let them experience what it's like to maybe not have water everyday. What it's like to have a breeze. What it's like to have a cool night and a warm day."

"Then, after that, just plopp them wherever you want and let them grow."

For more material on avian influenza and gardening tips, visit extension.uga.edu.

Narcotics Anonymous

A new NA group called "One Is Too Many" has started meeting in Young Harris at Sharp Memorial Methodist Church. Meetings are being held every Wednesday evening at 6 p.m. The church is on campus and the meeting entrance is through the back door.

For further questions about Narcotics Anonymous please call the NA Help Line at 888-666-3609.

Bulldozer...continued from Page 1A

equipment or trailer," said Katie Strickland, GDOT District One Communications Officer.

Added Strickland: "We were doing grading work on SR 325 (two weeks ago), and they were on SR 325 turning left on SR 515 (toward Blairsville) and the weight shifted, and it broke the ratchet binder."

In other news, GDOT will be hosting a "Location and Design Public Hearing Open House" this week, on Thursday, April 6, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Haralson Memorial Civic Center.

The civic center is located at 165 Wellborn Street in Blairsville.

The open house will feature information on the widening of GA 515 to four lanes between Blairsville and Young Harris.



Broken ratchet binder.

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