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in Union County began on Old Highway 76, as a motorist abandoned their vehicle at the intersection with Fairview Church Road.

Union County Sheriff's Deputy Sam Combs was standing guard, using his patrol vehicle to alert eastbound and westbound traffic that the vehicle, a Chevrolet compact, was in the roadway, with its hazard lights on. The driver of the vehicle was nowhere to be found.

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris sent county workers home early Friday morning, expecting the worse to happen with road conditions. The county workers that didn't get to go home worked for the County Road department. They spent their work hours pouring gravel and salt on local roads and trying to make travel possible.

In a move ahead of the storm, Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe closed schools for Friday classes on Thursday evening, in anticipation of inclement weather.

The majority of mountain schools followed suit.

Road conditions were so suspect on Friday, banks closed around 2 p.m. due to bad weather conditions.

EMA Director Worden said actually, the county had been spared any major incidents.

"All-in-all, I'd say we came out of this one pretty good," Chief Worden said. "We could have been in the same boat with Towns and



This stretch of U.S. 19/129 was not friendly to motorists on Friday as black ice conditions made driving treacherous and an incredible chore. Photo/Joe Collins

Rabun counties."

Neighboring Towns County and its neighbor, Rabun County were featured on *The Weather Channel* because of the inclement weather conditions.

Both counties became skating rinks as black ice conditions prompted emergency management agencies in those counties to urge motorists to stay at home and off the roads.

Towns County Chief Deputy Jeff Edge went as far as to ask residents not to even get out and walk, for fear of physical injuries due to potential falls due to the icy conditions.

Georgia Department of

Transportation spokesperson Teri Pope said in the early hours of the winter storm, the mountain counties were GDOT's primary focus.

"Union, Towns, White, Rabun and Lumpkin counties were the priorities in the early hours," Pope said. "That shifted as the day moved on as Hall and Jackson counties became a problem. There are five bridges over I-85 in Jackson County and they became a problem and they all required attention."

When it was all said and done, the day's only casualty appeared to be Commissioner Paris.

It appears as he left his office Friday morning, he

forgot something inside. He turned and ran to go back inside and retrieve the item, and hit a patch of ice.

No, he didn't break any bones, but, he did bruise his pride.

"I went flying and fortunately my hands were in the air," he said. "If they had been behind me, I might have broken a wrist."

Flu...continued from Page 1A

in Union County.

The flu season lasts through the end of March so there is still a need to be vaccinated," Lance said. "We still have plenty of vaccine so we want people to get their flu shots if they haven't so far."

The Union County Health Department has a substantial supply of vaccine on hand and advises everyone to consult his or her health care provider concerning vaccination.

"This is a really bad year for the flu here in Union County. We've been in contact with the hospital and the emergency room has seen over 60 confirmed cases this season and that is a lot for our area," said Glenda McGill, Union County Health Department Manager.

The health department can administer the vaccine at a cost of \$25.00 per adult and \$14.80 per child.

The Georgia Department of Public Health Division has determined that influenza (flu) has hit Georgia harder this season than it has in the past 10 years.

The Department of Public Health says that the illness should not be taken lightly because of the seriousness of the symptoms and the possible side effects that could include death.

To date, only two deaths have been reported in Georgia as a result of flu symptoms although several deaths have been recorded throughout the United States.

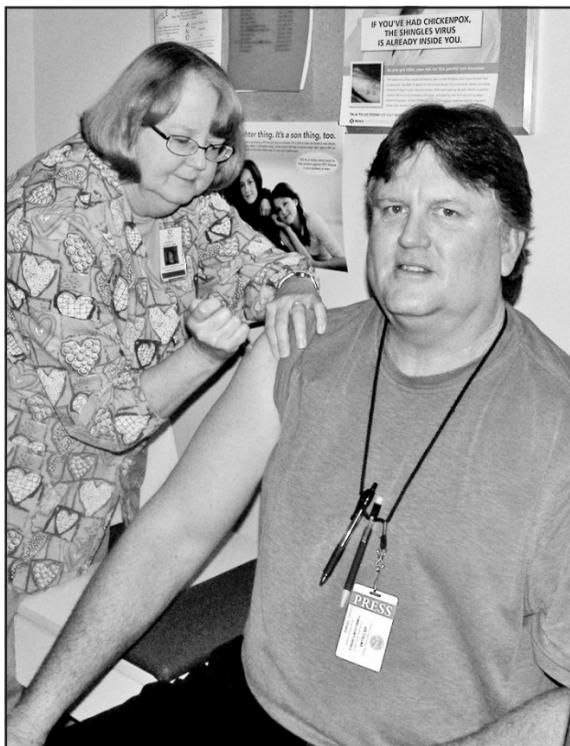
In the Metro Atlanta area alone, there have been over 555 people hospitalized with confirmed flu cases with many more hospital admissions throughout Georgia.

According to the Department of Public Health, the peak season for the flu bug is near the end of January and on thru the month of February and into March.

However, reports indicate the season started early in Georgia.

"There is still vaccine remaining in Georgia so if people want to get their flu shot, they need only contact their local Health Department or their health care provider," Department of Public Health spokesperson David Palmer said.

The Department of Public



North Georgia News staff writer Joe Collins winces as he takes a flu vaccine in the arm on Monday. Joe didn't even need a lollipop afterwards, but he asked for one.

Health advises everyone over the age of 6 months old to receive the vaccination unless they are in the high risk arena which can, and should, be determined by a physician or health care provider.

Nursing mothers or people with certain egg allergies fall into this category.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta recommends that people who are at a high risk from complications of flu symptoms and their caregivers be vaccinated annually.

The high-risk group includes, but not limited too, those individuals who have asthma, neurological conditions, heart disease, and diabetes, blood disorders, liver disorders or anyone who has a weakened immune system.

The CDC stipulates that any individual who wishes to receive the vaccine should consult a doctor or health care provider concerning their own individual needs.

The good news is that the vaccine seems to be effective.

The CDC states that more than 60 percent of vaccinated people will not have to

visit their doctor for flu-related symptoms.

This percentage is well within the expectations of the CDC who has declared, "Persons receiving their vaccination who have become ill with the flu, report that symptoms are not as severe. Many individuals report that even though they became ill, the symptoms and time away from work or school is lessened."

There will always be some who still get sick even though they are vaccinated, but this year's vaccine is doing a good job of prevention.

One reason many people forgo getting vaccinated is the fear that they will succumb to the flu from the vaccine.

According to the CDC this is impossible because there is no living virus found in the vaccine.

Brasstown Concert Association presents the Fire Pink Trio

Brasstown Concert Association presents the Fire Pink Trio, a dynamic and poetic trio of harp, flute and viola. The concert is at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, February 17 at Keith House, John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. No reservations required. Adult tickets: \$15; student tickets: \$7. For information contact a BCA Board member at 828-389-4210 or brasstownconcertnews@gmail.com. NTJJan30,C2)ac

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