Commissioner Questions April 3, 2014

Q. You reported in your Q & A a few weeks ago the amount that Union County residents spent on the lottery in 2012. Does Union County get any of that money or does the state get it all?

A. We reached out to the Georgia Lottery Corporation and received the following information regarding distribution of the lottery funds.

<u>Fiscal Year 2012 totals (Union County)</u>

Total Lottery Sales in 2012	$ 6.95 million
Total Lottery Dollars returned to Union County	$ 5.65 million.
Prizes paid:	$ 4.07 million
Retailer Commissions:	$418,800
HOPE Dollars:	$975,300/458 students
PRE-K Dollars:	$183,400/66 students

Q. What are all the pink stakes in the ground along Mulkey Gap and Owl Town Road?

A. These flags will be the location of new high reflectivity signs we will be installing on many roads in Union County. Some will be new signage and some will be replacements. In all, 4,386 new and/or replacement signs will be installed on county roads. We anticipate that this will be completed prior to the end of this year.

Q. Why are we spending all of this money on signs?

A. This is a program being offered through the Georgia Department of Transportation to local authorities for the use of Federal Funds in what is called "Off-System Safety projects". The use of these funds is for the purpose of reducing vehicle crash and fatality rates on off-system (county and city) roads and streets. Over 40 percent of fatal vehicle crashes happen on roads and streets. We are very pleased to be able to make these safety improvements for Union County citizens. We had to go through a complicated application process to receive these funds and this has been an ongoing project for a few years. We are excited that it is finally happening.

Q. How is the county going to pay for these signs?

A. We are pleased to report that we received this grant from GDOT in the amount of $350,000 for this project and the county will not be required to spend any of our local tax dollars, although we will be doing some stripping not covered in this grant.

Q. What makes the new signs safer?

A. Basically, the high reflectivity signs are made of material that is more efficient in redirecting light back to its source which gives signs and pavement markings a brighter appearance at night from the driver's perspective. Motorists experience the benefits of the new signs whenever light from their headlights shines on traffic signs. The signs will appear to glow in the dark, making them easier to see. They are also much easier to see during daylight conditions.

Q. Is all the grant money being spent just on the signs?

A. No. A portion of the funding will pay for new striping on many of the same roads that the signs will be installed on. This will be a huge improvement for many of our roads. While there is no "free" money, most of this funding does come from the Federal Highway program which is funded by the .18 cents per gallon federal gas tax on the fuel you purchase.