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men through seniors in high school, arrived early Saturday morning from Barrow, Dade, Gordon, Jackson, Oglethorpe, Pickens, Rabun and Union counties, all looking to secure positions at the state meet.

Of the 10 Junior Teams, Union County's lone Junior team placed third for the entire competition, thanks to the handy shooting of Daniel Griggs, Travis Kerr, Ben Pongetti and Thomas Mercer.

Pongetti did his team and his county proud by scoring a perfect 25 of 25 in the modified trap shoot singles, and he was rewarded for his sharpshooting by winning High Overall Individual in the Junior Division.

"I was more excited than I was nervous, so my legs were kind of twitching and stuff, but I was more excited than nervous," said Pongetti, a seventh-grader and first time District Qualifying competitor who just started shooting shotgun a couple months ago. "I've wanted to be a Marine Corps sniper for a while, so I've been shooting my high-powered pellet guns and stuff like that, and I've been training, so I'm pretty excited to actually start shooting real guns."

As for the Senior 4-H'ers, Union County's Team One placed First overall in 19 teams, followed by two teams from Pickens County rounding out Second and Third places.

The winning Senior team consisted of Blane Brown, Patrick Colwell, Austin Dyer, Tara McCann and Kaenon Young.

McCann won High Overall Individual for her perfect 25 of 25 shoot, edging out her teammate, Brown, who also shot 25 of 25 but came in Second after McCann went 10 for 10 in doubles to break their tie.

After hitting every clay put in front of her that day, McCann said she felt like crying, but don't worry – she said it was the "good kind of crying."

"This is my thing, it's just what I do," said Union County High School 10th-grader McCann, who several years ago nearly quit before she even began after missing all five targets at her first practice with Union County



Tara McCann with her little brother Jacob at the District Qualifying shoot on Saturday, April 16. McCann shot every clay that flew in front of her that day, and won High Overall Individual for the entire competition.

4-H back in the seventh grade. "I'm thinking about going to Emmanuel (College), and there's a trap team.

"They had a recruiter come out my first or second year here, and he looked at us and I wasn't very good then at all. But now, it would be cool to go there and be on the team."

The entire roster of Union County 4-H'ers heading to state after Saturday's District Qualifying is: Grayson Blocker, Blane Brown, Spencer Brundrett, Cole Cantrell, Mark Cecci, Patrick Colwell, Logan Dillard, Austin Dyer, Angel Flater, Daniel Griggs, Elena Griggs, Dakota Havard, Hunter Kelly, Caleb Kephart, Travis Kerr, Allie Kumler, Cooper Lance, Tara McCann, Jacob McClure, Samuel Mercer, Thomas Mercer, Caitlyn Murphy, Eric Pericone, Ben Pongetti, Emily Rankin, Caleb Sanders, Caroline Sanders, Hayden Smith, Hannah Tanner, Kyle Underwood, Austin Urban, Andrew Walker and Kaenon Young.

The Union County Head Coach is Keith Herbert, assisted by fellow coaches Gene Margelli, Mark McGillis, Shannon Rankin and Homer Arrowood.

Coach McGillis, who is a state S.A.F.E. trainer through 4-H, certifies other coaches in the 4-H discipline of shotgun. S.A.F.E. stands for Shooting Awareness Fun and Education.

McGillis worked this past Saturday as a state shoot

manager for the District Qualifying Match, and therefore was not there in his coaching capacity for Union County.

"We're in youth development, and it takes a great individual, mental focus, patience and self-confidence, and they learn all these through the S.A.F.E. program," said McGillis, speaking on what it takes to compete at the level Union County 4-H'ers regularly achieve. "Youth development is about life skills.

"Firearms safety is a life skill. After all, lack of knowledge of a firearm is more dangerous than the firearm will ever be by itself. We don't use weapons in 4-H. We use tools to break targets, we use arrows to punch holes in paper. We use BB guns to punch holes in paper."

This competition was the seventh District Qualifying Match hosted by Union County, and the 21st year in a row that Union County 4-H has competed in shotgun. Head Coach Herbert said that the eighth year hosting the competition should take place at the up-and-coming Union County Shooting Range.

"Just this past week we had our last environmental study completed," said Coach Herbert. "Hopefully they're going to give us the verbal okay to start pushing dirt. We're probably going to have it done by November, so we're going to start within the next 30 days and try to be done before Christmas."

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– and especially those from Union County – the perfect environment for family-friendly fun.

New this year was the use of the Union County Saddle Club Arena, with rides and games inside and under cover of the arena roof, as well as outside, exposed to the beautiful weather of all last week.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the fair lacked a good many rides that were initially expected before its arrival, and Kiwanis Club members hope to bring bigger and better rides to next year's fair – something to entice more teens to come out and have some fun with Kiwanis.

Wednesday, April 13, was an extra special fair day for Kiwanians, as they hosted nearly 200 kids from surrounding counties to come and ride for free, with meals provided by United Community Bank.

The Kiwanis Fair is a continuing tribute to the



memory of Bob Garrison, a Kiwanian who envisioned the community-oriented event but was taken too soon from those he loved.

Money collected during the fair by the Kiwanis Club – \$2 per adult – goes right back into the community in the form of scholarships or financial assistance for children

in need.

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said that he and the Saddle Club were pleased to offer the arena to Kiwanis.

"It is yet another facility that the county has been able to make available to many different groups to enjoy," said Commissioner Paris.

Voter registration deadline April 26, early voting begins May 2 for May 24 primary

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Tuesday, April 26, is the last day to register to vote in the May 24 General Primary/Nonpartisan Election.

Registering to vote is as simple as swinging by the Registrar's Office in the Union County Courthouse – the employees within will supply the necessary registration application that, once filled out, will allow a resident to vote in the May 24 election.

It is important to note that, should a runoff election be necessary for any of the races on the May 24 ballot, the runoff election will take place on July 26, and in order to vote in that runoff, residents will have to have been registered already by the April 26 deadline.

"You can bring (the registration application) in, you can mail it in," said Deputy Registrar Diana Nichols. "This has to be your legal residence, and you cannot be registered in two different states or two different coun-

ties or two different anything – you can only be registered in one place."

Furthermore, residents can register at 17 and a half years of age, but they can't vote until they are 18 years old.

"You can register at any public library, you can register whenever you get your driver's license or have those changed at DDS (Department of Driver Services)," said Nichols. "You can regis-

ter here at the office, you can register online at the secretary of state's office (www.sos.ga.gov). And Georgia also has an app (called GA Votes) that you can download on your phone and register to vote through it."

For more information on registering to vote – or to see if you are or are not registered within the county – call the Union County Board of Registrar's office at (706) 439-6016.

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graduated from the Professional Management Program, Command College, and also is a graduate of the prestigious Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy's 159th session.

SSgt. Purcell also is one of the select law enforcement officers chosen to travel to Israel and serve as a law enforcement exchange officer.

This is a great opportunity to meet and interact with local law enforcement personnel.

The class is open to the public, and all active duty law enforcement officers are invited to attend.

The training will cover the do's and don't's for conceal carry and provide those in attendance an overview of how they can legally defend themselves and their property as a citizen of Georgia.

No firearm is required. The department looks forward to seeing a packed house at Haralson Memorial Civic Center.