

Deaths...from Page 1A

Mack Mason said that a 911 call was received on July 5 after family members visiting the residence discovered the bodies.

Authorities say the two small children are in state custody, but not in the immediate

area. Physically, the children are fine. They have begun counseling to deal with the horrific tragedy that they witnessed, authorities said.

The case remains under investigation, but, law enforcement is adamant that

the person responsible for the tragedy is deceased, meaning Sparks.

Funeral arrangements have not been released. No additional details were available at press time.

Lawson and her unborn

child are the first two homicides of 2014.

Like the four homicides that occurred in 2013, the deaths are the result of family-related domestic disputes.

Festival...from Page 1A

brate the craftsmanship of this region's skilled artists with the 16th Annual Butternut Creek

Festival at Meeks Park. More than 75 vendors and entertainers will bring their hard work, blood sweat, and tears, and God-given talents to Blairsville. And their hard work hasn't gone unnoticed. The Southeastern Tourism Society has selected the festival as one of the top festivals in the southeast for six consecutive years.

The artisans donate a portion of their proceeds to Meeks Park, summer camps, and the after school program and Union County Middle School will feature a student art display at this year's festival.

As expected, most of the vendors call Georgia and North Carolina home, but a handful come from South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, and Virginia. Not all of the artists are fortunate enough to reside in the beautiful Blue Ridge mountains, and despite the meticulous application process, some vendors are willing to travel close to 1,000 miles for two days at the Butternut Creek Festival at scenic Meeks Park.

"The number of vendors is limited to keep the event free of charge," said Mike Smith of the High Country Artisans. "We could fit another 100 booths on the ball field but we also don't want the show to become diluted. We pick out the four best from

each category, such as woodworking. Applicants will also send in a photo of their work and one photo of them making their product."

Jamie Estes will bring her homemade natural soaps to Meeks Park all the way from Virginia, approximately 250 miles away. Barbara Dupree from Moncure, NC, just outside of Greensboro, NC, specializes in glass and metal crafts. Dupree, along with Connie and Norris Crawford from Greensboro, Ala will travel almost 350 miles. Crawford and handcrafted leather are from deep in Tide Country, just south of Tuscaloosa, Ala. During last year's festival, Norris Crawford praised the Meeks Park staff on behalf of all of the vendors.

"I can't thank the Park staff enough for the new side walks that they have put in," Norris Crawford said. "It has made a world of difference to all of the vendors."

However, not every one will top Skip Staab of Lecanto, Fla who's bringing his rustic furniture and pottery from nearly 500 miles south.

Live Entertainment begins at 10:45 a.m. on Saturday with Bruce Adams, at noon will be Bill Torrance, at 1 p.m. - Fast Gear, 2 p.m. - Bill Torrance, and 3 p.m. Fast Gear.

On Sunday, 12:15 p.m.

- Elvis (Roy Perrin), 1:15 p.m. - Raven & Red, 2:15 p.m. - Elvis, and 3:15 p.m. - Raven & Red..

The Blue Ridge Dulcimer Players will be performing Saturday and Sunday. Craftsman will be demonstrating their crafts all weekend with Mal McEwen, chainsaw carving at booth 78. Jerry King, foot pedal wood turning at booth 26. David Little, Hand Adze Bowls at booth 28, Robin Weinrich, jewelry at booth 6, and Beth Zorbanos, corn shuck dolls at booth 20.

At booth 77, Butch Dey will hold a blacksmith demonstration. Hans Meier, puzzles, booth 47, Linda Woody, pottery, booth 45, Don Donaldson, brooms, booth 16, and Alpaca Farm, weaving, at booth 25.

Not only is the festival free, but there is no charge for parking as well. Gates open at 10 a.m. on both days. Come on out and enjoy one of the most treasured community events in Union County history.

For more details, you can visit the festival's webpage at www.butternutcreek-festival.com or on Facebook at Butternut Creek Art Festival. For additional details regarding the High Country Artisans, you may call (706) 781-1221.

Sting...from Page 1A

grandmother called the Union County Sheriff's Office."

Deputy Jennifer Carnes took the report. She questioned vendors at the event and was told that McGuffey was a regular at Trash and Treasures Yard Sale at the Union County Farmers Market.

The Criminal Investigation Division arranged a sting operation to catch McGuffey.

"He agreed to meet our undercover officer," Mangifesta said. "When we pulled up at

the undisclosed location, sure enough, he was sitting there waiting on us."

Believing he was meeting an under-aged teen, McGuffey, who promised to bring beer to the arranged meeting, met the undercover officer with beer in hand.

"McGuffey got out of his vehicle, approached the undercover officer, and he was completely oblivious to the fact that two detectives were

standing right behind him," Mangifesta said. "We took him down and arrested him."

Mangifesta is worried that McGuffey is an expert at these types of arranged meetings with under-age girls.

"When he told the young girl at the Farmers Market that his last girlfriend was 13 years old, we suspected this wasn't his first rodeo," Mangifesta said.

A search of McGuffey's residence yielded an abundance of pornography, and explicit photographs. Those items are still under investigation to determine if they contain any child pornography.

The Union County Sheriff's Office asks for folks to take a close look at McGuffey for fear that he has other victims in the area, especially Union and Towns counties.

Call (706) 439-6066 if you have any information that might help law enforcement.

Meters...from Page 1A

looks like a black little hockey puck on top of it. It's part of the antenna system to the meter. And underneath that, there's all these wires that reads the meter. What some folks have done, is they've accidentally run over it with their car or their lawnmower."

Reasons for water meter malfunction, include a change in water pressure, air pressure as well as natural aging. There are new electronic water meters and some residents may not be entirely used to them. In some cases, residents who have accidentally damaged the antenna could be looking at a cost of up to \$140 or more.

Typically, there are two types of water meters and they can each be read the same way. One unit is 1,000 meters. The newer water meters, or e-meters, have an earth wire connected to the pipe work on either side of the meter. This wire will ensure that any possible static electricity, caused by the water going through the pipe, bypasses the water sensor. If the wires to the meter are disturbed, or damaged, the water usage can potentially be miscalculated.

Another problem is what is referred to as number snag, or grabbing, where one number changes and drags the number to the left of it with it, causing for a faulty read. Other problems could be from electrical appliances being too close to the meter, causing vibrations to disrupt the pipes.

There are a few suggested way to check to see if your meter is working properly. For starters, it is recommended that the tap be turned off to ensure no water is being used on the property. Next, turn off the stop tap inside your property and record the meter reading outside at the water meter. Leave the supply off for up to four hours before rechecking its reading. Then, fill a container in which the measurements are listed, or one that you know how much water can be held. If the meter outside remains inactive there may be a problem.

A common time of year for water meter problems lay in weather that is either really hot or really cold. The thaw and freeze in the winter is harsh on some meters, due to the pipes movement of rocks and the puncturing of wires, causing a short. Other times, a short from too much heat generation from an appliance, such as an electric water tank, is to blame.

"I always took my cover off before I mowed, but you can't do that now because of the wires," said Mayor Conley. "Residents

may have noticed their water bills go up do to damaging the wires or the antenna. Of course, the best thing to do is to contact the water department or an electrician as soon as possible."