



# Gwinnett County Government Communications Division NEWS RELEASE

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## COUNTY OPENS LARGER, BETTER-EQUIPPED MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE AND MORGUE BUILDING

(Lawrenceville, Ga., May 17, 2017) – County officials held a ribbon cutting today to mark the opening of a 15,000-square-foot Medical Examiner's Office and Morgue with more space, improved technology, and more efficient administrative capability. The new building is located at 320 Hurricane Shoals Road NE in Lawrenceville.

Board of Commissioners Chairman Charlotte Nash said the new facility provides the 10-person Medical Examiner's Office with the capability to handle the caseload that comes with a county of nearly 1 million people.

"The Medical Examiner's Office is a key link in the criminal justice process," Nash said. "It is imperative for the victims, their families and for us all that the Medical Examiner's Office has the tools and the facilities they need to find the facts behind deaths that are suspicious or unattended. And for the public, this new building has features that are more sympathetic and respectful to visitors."

The \$5.7 million facility, paid for with SPLOST revenue, replaces two separate locations – a small morgue located within a County facility and a rented administrative office located a half-mile away. The new building was designed to achieve LEED Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

District 4 Commissioner John Heard said the recently completed structure reflects the foresight of Gwinnett citizens to invest in public buildings and infrastructure.

"This is something we really needed, and it would have been much harder to pay for if not for the SPLOST approved by the voters," Heard said. "The new building incorporates many ideas from the medical examiner's staff so that it will meet their needs going into the future."

The new morgue space has three state-of-the-art autopsy stations, including a separate station for cases requiring isolation. It has enhanced medical and laboratory equipment, and space for evidence processing and storage. The former morgue had only one autopsy station with limited medical and laboratory equipment. The new morgue can accommodate 50 bodies; the former morgue had room for just four.

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In addition, the new building has a conference room for family and visitors, a children's area and an outdoor respite area. It offers a blend of natural and artificial lighting. Unlike the previous location, this one also has a library and research area, and County-owned computers integrated with the County's network.

"This new facility will give us additional capabilities and allow us to function more efficiently," said Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Carol Terry. "This will benefit not just county law enforcement investigations but local governments and the state as well. It's a facility to be proud of."

The Medical Examiner's Office conducts death investigations in accordance with the Georgia Death Investigation Act, including postmortem examinations, to determine cause and manner of death in cases where the death is unattended or suspicious. In 2016, more than 1,600 deaths were reported to the Gwinnett County Medical Examiner's Office and approximately 379 examinations, including 185 full autopsies, were performed.

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**Note:** A selection of images from the event is available on [Flickr](#).