

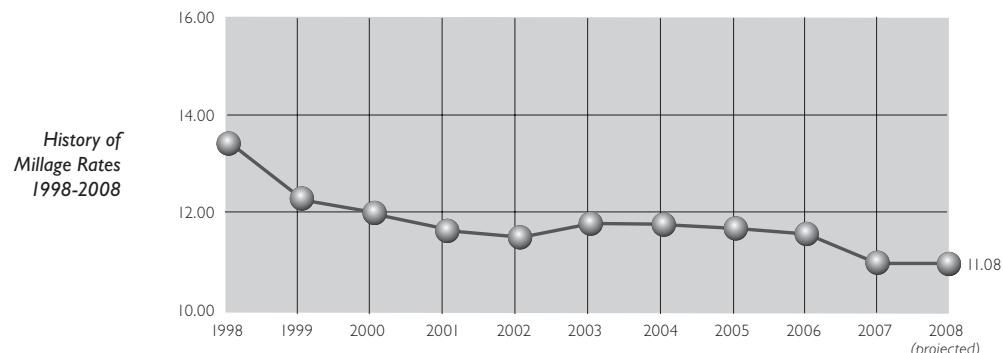


08 state of the county

Local Economy

By many different measures, Gwinnett is a prosperous and growing county. We continue to attract tens of thousands of new residents each year, drawn by employment, educational, and housing opportunities as well as our quality of life.

- Our population now stands at an estimated 776,347 residents, up more than 180,000 since the 2000 Census (Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census and Gwinnett County Economic Analysis Division)
- Gwinnett gained more than 9,800 jobs, a growth of 3.1 percent, between 2005 and 2006 contrasted with 2.4 percent statewide, according to the Georgia Department of Labor. Gwinnett had 325,070 jobs in the first quarter of 2007 (latest figure available), an increase of 4.3 percent over the same quarter the previous year
- Unemployment is 4.0 percent compared to 4.7 percent statewide according to the Georgia Department of Labor (October 2007)
- 2008 Net Tax Digest is expected to grow 2.6 percent
- Gwinnett County has rolled back the millage rate with the passage of the 1997 and 2001 SPLOST programs a total 2.0 mills; combined with rollbacks to offset property value updates, the County has reduced the millage rate a total 2.37 mills since 1997 – an 18 percent reduction to the total county millage (this includes a .25 mill addition in 2003 for the voter-approved jail expansion)
- Tax Assessor assessed 21,500 new lots and houses/buildings totaling more than \$1.25 billion in value and updated assessments on 67,000 properties



County Finances

Gwinnett has maintained AAA credit ratings from all three major credit rating agencies for the 10th straight year. Only 23 other counties across the nation can boast triple-AAA ratings. We issued \$12 million of revenue bonds in 2007 through the development authority. Our excellent credit results in significant interest savings for our residents. The County's 2008 budget total is \$1.5 billion, slightly less than last year.

The **Operating Budget** for 2008 includes:

- 95 new positions (compared to 211 last year)
 - 16 associated with the county's 10th Superior Court judge
 - 16 for newly completed capital projects (9 to staff a new medical unit in Fire and Emergency Services and 7 to staff new parks)
 - 36 for public safety initiatives and quality of life (35 positions in the Police Department: 29 sworn police officers, 5 positions for the 911 Call Center, and 1 administrative position; 1 position in the Solicitor's Office)
 - 18 to enhance service delivery (16 positions for the Water Resources Department: 5 each for capital project management, water infrastructure maintenance, and stormwater infrastructure maintenance, and 1 position for planning and development; 2 positions will be added to Fleet Management for asset management and fuel services)
 - 9 for general government functions
- Revitalization reserve: \$410,000
- Operational efficiency studies: \$150,000



08 state of the county



Sugarloaf Parkway Extension Groundbreaking



Gwinnett Braves Press Conference



Quality of Life Unit Office



Inmates paint over gang-related graffiti

The **Capital Improvement Program** (2008 – 2013) includes:

- \$1.3 billion for water, sewer, and stormwater projects
- \$394 million for transportation improvements
- \$101 million for parks, libraries, and social-service delivery centers
- \$148 million for general government, tag offices, and central services facilities
- \$115 million for public safety, courts, and sheriff

The **2005 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax**, or SPLOST, began on April 1, 2005, and is expected to raise about \$630 million over four years for transportation, public safety, parks, and libraries. The County portion is budgeted conservatively at \$550 million. Gwinnett's 15 municipalities will share about \$89 million.

In this year's **2008 Capital Budget**, we have designated projects for libraries, parks and recreation, roads, and public safety, including:

- Construction of Alexander and Rock Springs Parks
- Continuation of existing fire station relocations and the addition of new fire stations
- Construction of the Sugarloaf Parkway extension
- Continuation of the existing road program, including ongoing rehabilitation and resurfacing

Economic Development

- Board of Commissioners made economic development a priority in 2006 with adoption of an Economic Development Ordinance and creation of an Economic Analysis Division
- Efforts continued into 2007 with a major financial commitment to Partnership Gwinnett, a Chamber-led community and economic development initiative
- Partnership Gwinnett recorded approximately 30 expansions and relocations, key among those Meggitt Defense Systems (\$80 million relocation, 400 new jobs) and Peak 10, Inc. (\$20 million relocation, 20 new jobs)
- Board of Commissioners, Gwinnett Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Atlanta Braves announced that the club's AAA minor league team will relocate to Gwinnett County beginning in the 2009 season; conservative estimate of a minor league ball club's impact on our economy is approximately \$15 million per year

Revitalization

- Code enforcement officers from Planning and Development became part of the Quality of Life Operations Section in the Police Department, coordinating operations and improving efficiency in enforcement of laws and ordinances relating to property maintenance
- QoL's operations moved into a central headquarters on Oakbrook Parkway in Norcross and now has a hotline and online reporting system for complaints: 770.417.3434 and www.gwinnettqualityoflife.com
- QoL officers issued 9,867 notices of violation 5,581 citations, and 205 arrest warrants; removed 17,707 unpermitted signs; and towed 1,115 junked, abandoned, or illegally parked vehicles
- Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful led effort to draft new solid waste management plan with input from 50 citizen advisory board members and 5,000 residents; Commissioners approved draft plan designed to result in state-mandated 23 percent reduction in waste stream by 2017
- Corrections Department used inmate and community service labor to pick up trash along more than 3,500 miles of roadside; process nearly 24 million pounds of recyclable materials; and cover gang-related graffiti sites on fencing, walls, and other surfaces
- Community Improvement Districts maximized County-provided grant funds with matching dollars and contributions from private property owners for revitalization projects such as:
 - Extending sewer capacity to an underutilized area targeted for revitalization (current plans for property include medical offices) in Evermore CID
 - Creating redevelopment plan/mixed-use overlay standards for Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Buford Highway in Gwinnett Village CID
 - Branding community with gateway monuments and banners in Gwinnett Place CID



08 state of the county



Police Training Center



Animal Welfare Center



Fire Station 27



DeShong Park Skate Area



I-85/SR 316 Interchange

Public Safety

- Celebrated opening of new state-of-the-art Police Training Facility and new Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center
- Opened new Fire Station 27 in the Dacula area and relocated Fire Station 8 in Grayson and began construction of new Fire Station 28 near Loganville
- Relocated Fire Station 1 in Norcross opens first quarter of 2008
- Hired 92 police officers, 75 sheriff's deputies, 26 corrections officers, and 102 firefighters
- Police Department maintained its national accreditation, while the Corrections Department initiated the process to earn accreditation from the American Correctional Association
- Police officers responded to just over 710,000 calls; the 911 Call Center received nearly 790,000 calls and about two-thirds of those were emergency calls
- Fire and Emergency Services personnel responded to 65,000 calls for service
- Acquired new Hazardous Material Decontamination Pod Truck with assistance from federal grant

Community Services

- 2007 was a year of milestones:
 - Gwinnett County Senior Services celebrated 35 years of service to the community's seniors
 - Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation observed 20th anniversary as countywide system
 - Gwinnett Senior Center at Bethesda Park commemorated 15 years
 - Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center marked first anniversary
- In an effort to protect water quality, Cooperative Extension Service presented more than 60 educational programs on the safe and proper use of fertilizers and pesticides
- Delivered 88,000 Meals on Wheels; served 35,200 meals in the Lawrenceville Senior Center
- Health and Human Services Division volunteers contributed more than 40,000 hours of service
- New parks and amenities opened: new aquatic center at Bethesda Park; DeShong Park; second phase of Little Mulberry Park; Sweet Water Park; and new skate park at Mountain Park Park
- Acquired 334 acres of new parkland in 2007; total park acreage now totals 8,613
- Awarded design of the Hamilton Mill Branch Library; construction on the County's third "green" building and 15th branch library will begin in 2008
- 6.5 million items were checked out from the public library system

Transportation

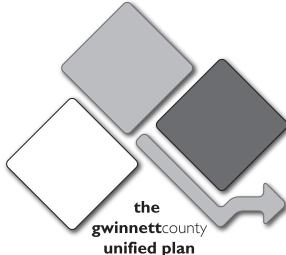
- Expedited completion of projects: 45 last year compared to 35 in 2006 and 25 in 2005
- Spent \$140 million on SPLOST transportation improvements in 2007 compared to \$103 million in 2006, \$58 million in 2005, and \$49 million in 2004
- Began work on Sugarloaf Parkway extension phase I, section I (SR 20 to New Hope Road)
- Completed 23 "quick fix" projects aimed at reducing congestion (re-striping, new sidewalks, new turn lanes, etc.)
- Opened new central maintenance facility with state-of-the-art traffic control center
- Resurfaced 85 miles of roadway and maintained more than 2,750 miles of roads and 626 traffic signals
- Gwinnett Transit had nearly two million boardings on express and local buses
- Major county-state projects will open to traffic by the end of this year: I-85/SR 316 interchange; Pleasant Hill Road tunnel under Buford Highway and railroad tracks; and SR 20 and SR 120 widening projects

Water Resources

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers granted an easement that allows Gwinnett to move forward with a plan to return up to 40 million gallons per day of highly-treated wastewater to Lake Lanier through a reuse pipeline being built between the F. Wayne Hill Water Resources Center and the lake
- Installed 106 miles of sewer and 75 miles of water mains
- County government responded to drought by discontinuing watering athletic fields and washing vehicles, reducing inmate showers and laundry, and modifying or replacing plumbing fixtures



08 state of the county



Gwinnett County
Public Health Services



NACo Center
for Sustainable
Communities Award

- Commissioners passed a water conservation resolution; key elements include penalties for repeat violators of the outdoor watering ban, excessive use charges for high-volume users, and participation in a regional rebate program for installing low-flow toilets in single-family homes built before 1993
- Met Governor Perdue's mandate to cut water consumption by 10 percent in December

Planning and Development

- Gwinnett County will adopt a new comprehensive plan in 2008—the 2030 Unified Plan—organized around five themes: promoting economic development and maintaining fiscal health; fostering redevelopment; improving mobility and accessibility; providing more housing choices; and making Gwinnett a “preferred place” to live, work, and play
- Improved efficiency by consolidating development review services and personnel and implementing Accella Wireless system for real time data entry of inspections
- Amendments to 1985 Zoning Resolution include: expansion of overlay district to Peachtree Corners; creation of large lot zoning district; and establishment of 1.5-acre minimum for car lot rezonings
- Issued 3,526 new single-family permits, down 47 percent from the previous year; and 1,688 commercial, office, and industrial permits, only 170 fewer than 2006

General Government

- Developed plan to begin implementing succession planning process; 142 managers and supervisors graduated from County-sponsored leadership programs
- Completed disaster recovery strategic plan for County's data center
- County health department moved into 21,000-square-foot clinic; space is in renovated big box building that already houses elections, records, and storage
- UGA's Carl Vinson Institute of Government studied ethics ordinances and practices; final report stated “Gwinnett County has an excellent reputation for ethical behavior among its citizens and employees, other local governments, businesses, and vendors”
- County government has built two green buildings (Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center, Police Training Facility) with another one in design (Hamilton Mill Library) and will be participating with the Atlanta Regional Commission in development of a “Green Communities” certification program for local governments in the region
- Enhanced e-government opportunities on www.gwinnettcounty.com with Citizen Self Service and other features; website attracted more than 39 million page views
- Developed new programming for TVgwinnett, government access cable channel 23, including a show on water issues, a series on *Partnership Gwinnett*, and *Talkin' Trash*, another series about issues affecting the environment such as solid waste and recycling

National and State Recognition

- Parks and Recreation: National Association of Counties **Acts of Caring Award** for SeniorNet Learning Centers; state lifeguarding championship title; and Atlanta Regional Commission **CREATE Community Award** for Community Schools and Joint Use Agreement (Board of Commissioners and Board of Education program)
- Health and Human Services: NACo **Achievement Award** for Senior Services safety program
- Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center: **ARC Developments of Excellence**; Georgia Urban Forest Council **Outstanding New Initiative**; NACo **Center for Sustainable Communities Award**; U.S. Green Building Council **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold Certification**; plus four other awards
- Financial Services: Distinguished Budget Presentation from Government Financial Officers Association; **Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting** from GFOA; and **Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award** from National Purchasing Institute
- National Committee for Employee Support of the Guard and Reserve **Patriotic Employer Award**
- Police Department: SWAT and Motor Units honored at Georgia Police and Fire Games
- Fleet Management: Automotive Service Excellence **Blue Seal of Excellence** (second consecutive year)
- Water Resources: Georgia Association of Water Professionals **Plant of the Year** (Shoal Creek); Project of the Year (McDaniel Farm); **Cross Connection Program of the Year**; and **Stormwater Program of the Year**