

gwinnettcounty CONNECTION

a monthly publication of **gwinnettcounty** government

JANUARY 2015



New water and sewer rate structure eliminates planned January increase

The Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners last month adopted a water and sewer rate resolution that eliminates an increase in rates that was scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2015. Without this action, water rates would have increased by approximately 3.5 percent and sewer rates would have increased by about 10 percent. The new rate resolution was also approved by the Gwinnett County Water and Sewerage Authority in December.

Under the new resolution, basic water rates for a residential home will remain \$4.85 per 1,000 gallons through the end of 2016. Residential water rates will increase by 7 cents per 1,000 gallons every other year starting in 2017, topping out at \$5.06 per 1,000 gallons in 2021. Residential sewer rates will remain \$7.82 per 1,000 gallons for the next two years. Rates will increase in alternating years beginning in 2017 for a total increase of 48 cents per 1,000 gallons during the seven-year period.

For more about future rate increases for residential, retail, and wholesale accounts, visit www.gwinnettcounty.com.

Sign up for email newsletters
from your smartphone!



AROUND GWINNETT

New online feature helps locate lost pets

If your pet is ever lost or found, the Gwinnett Animal and Enforcement Center has a new feature to help locate your furry friend. Since August 2014, lost and found pet reports have transitioned from onsite reports at the shelter to an online system at www.helpinglostpets.com. This resource allows families to enter detailed information about a lost or found pet into a national database. Families can also locate the pet's approximate location on a map and create a free poster to email or print. The poster contains a prominently displayed QR code for mobile phones.

The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center will also receive notification of the lost pet and assist with locating a pet's owners if brought to the shelter as a stray. Please note that it is still the owner's responsibility to come to the shelter to locate a lost pet. In addition, stray animals are held for a minimum of five days before it is offered for adoption, rescued, or, in extreme cases, euthanized. For more information, please contact the Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center at 770.339.3200.



Extension hosts annual plant sale

The Gwinnett Extension is offering varieties of blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, figs, apples, pomegranate, native azaleas, and other landscape plants as part of its annual sale. Orders will be taken January 2 through March 11, 2015. Visit www.gwinnettextension.com or call 678.377.4010 to request an order form.

FOCUS ON: Tax Commissioner's Tag Offices

FOCUS ON tells the story of how your county government employees provide high-quality services to you each and every day. January features the Tax Commissioner's customer service operations that ensure the collection of revenue that funds your local government and public schools and help residents understand the complex rules and regulations surrounding motor vehicle registrations and property taxes. To read more, visit www.gwinnettcounty.com.

County offices closed for King and Presidents Day holidays

All Gwinnett County government offices, with the exception of those operations required for the comfort and safety of the residents of the County, will be closed January 19 for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. Offices will reopen January 20. Offices also will be closed on February 16 for the Presidents Day holiday and reopen February 17.

Gwinnett County Government hosts many events, classes, and workshops for its residents. See these and more at www.gwinnettcountyevents.com.

Growing Up and Understanding It • FREE!

Girls: February 2 or 9 • 7:00pm to 8:30pm

Boys: February 5 • 7:00pm to 8:30pm

Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center Auditorium
75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville
678.377.4010

Mother-Son Valentine Dance

February 7 • 6:00pm to 9:00pm

Rhodes Jordan Park Community Recreation Center
100 East Crogan Street, Lawrenceville
678.277.0890

Proper Pruning Techniques for the Home Landscape • FREE!

February 11 • Noon to 1:00pm

Gwinnett Extension Conference Room
750 South Perry Street, Lawrenceville
678.377.4010

Your Credit Report and Score Seminar • FREE!

February 19 • 11:00am to Noon

Centerville Community Center
3025 Bethany Church Road, Snellville
770.985.4713

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send questions or comments to
shaunieka.taste@gwinnettcounty.com

Gwinnett County Communications Division
75 Langley Drive • Lawrenceville, GA 30046
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gwinnettSPLOST.com

your pennies
for transportation

Gwinnett, cities share SPLOST for 60 road projects

Three major road improvements, eight intersections, 35 sidewalk/pedestrian safety upgrades, and 14 resurfacing projects will share city and county funds from the current SPLOST sales tax program.

The 60 projects are included in 22 agreements hammered out between the county government and its 16 cities. Cities will manage construction for projects in 12 of the 22 agreements; Gwinnett County will manage the rest. Commissioners approved the first agreement on August 5 and the last on December 2.

The 2014 SPLOST program requires cities and the county to use at least 65 percent of their share of SPLOST revenue for transportation projects. The County must also use \$25 million for joint projects if cities pay at least 19 percent of the cost for transportation-related projects that benefit both city and county residents.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Make an emergency kit for your vehicle

January and February are peak times for winter storms, so be prepared before an emergency arises. Weather conditions such as snow and ice may cause you to be trapped in your car for an extended time period. Take these few steps to prepare an emergency kit for your vehicle:

- Winterize your vehicle and keep your gas tank at least half full to prevent your fuel line from freezing.
- Stock your emergency kit with the following: food and bottled water, a portable cell phone charger, ice scraper, flashlight and batteries, a first aid kit, blankets, jumper cables, and sand or cat litter for traction.
- If you do get stuck on the road, remain in your vehicle where rescuers are most likely to find you.
- Avoid going out on foot unless you can find a safe place to take shelter. Avoid idling for a long time with windows up or in an enclosed space.

www.gwinnettsafety411.com



PROTECTING OUR RESOURCES

Wastewater 101

Many of us don't know or even think about where our water goes once it leaves our homes. In some areas of the county, many homes are connected to system that treats wastewater onsite, commonly known as a septic system. Maintaining your septic system can help you save money and keep our waterways clean.

A typical septic system is made up of a septic tank and a drain field (or absorption field). A failing septic system can lead to an overflow of raw sewage, which can flow to a creek or storm drain or cause a backup into your house. Leaking septic systems, along with several other sources of fecal bacteria (such as pet waste and some agricultural facilities), have impaired more than 200 miles of Gwinnett's streams so that they do not meet the standards set by Georgia's Environmental Protection Division. As a minimum maintenance requirement, it is recommended that homeowners have their septic tanks pumped every three to five years.

If you are unsure about your home's wastewater treatment method or have more questions about septic tanks, please visit www.gwinnettstormwater.com and scroll to the bottom of the page for the link titled *Septic Tank Maintenance Information*. Here you will be offered directions on how to find your septic system installation and repair records, which will give you valuable information about your system and provide a map to help you locate your system in your yard.

Don't forget to attend our free workshop!

TAX COMMISSIONER

Emissions testing update

For 2015, all gasoline-powered and light-duty trucks 8,500 pounds or less with the model years 1991 to 2012 require an emissions test to register and renew. For testing locations and more information, visit www.cleanairforce.com.

Once your vehicle has been tested, please renew online at www.GwinnettTaxCommissioner.com.

CHECK IT OUT

Check out these audiobooks to help you get through your daily commute. Look for these and other audiobook titles at www.gwinnettpl.org.

Eat Move Sleep: How Small Choices Lead to Big Changes, by Tom Rath

Talk like TED: The 9 Public-Speaking Secrets of the World's Top Minds, by Carmine Gallo

As You Wish: Inconceivable Tales from the Making of the Princess Bride, by Cary Elwes

What I Know For Sure, by Oprah Winfrey

Department of Water Resources • Free Workshop!
Rain Gardens

February 12, 2015 • 7:00pm – 8:30pm
Gwinnett Justice and
Administration Center Auditorium
75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville

Learn how to select plants for your own rain garden and help protect our waterways from nonpoint source pollution. Attendees from unincorporated Gwinnett County, city of Lilburn, or city of Peachtree Corners can qualify for a maximum 5 percent credit toward their stormwater utility fee for the following year.

Presented by: Robert Brannen, Gwinnett Extension

Pre-register by emailing your name, address, and phone number to dwrswreg@gwinnettcountry.com or calling 678.376.7193 (press 5).