

GWINNETT COUNTY Connection

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Gwinnett County Government

MARCH 2020



Nash expresses optimism, highlights challenges in State of the County Address

Gwinnett Board of Commissioners Chairman Charlotte Nash voiced optimism that the county's future leaders will continue to meet Gwinnett's challenges at her 10th and final State of the County Address.

One primary area of focus, Nash said, should be early childhood literacy, which she said leads to many community problems. The solution, Nash said, is community awareness, support, and involvement. Gwinnett County is providing seed money to allow the Gwinnett County Public Library to enhance its focus on literacy and will expand programs at County parks and summer camps.

Nash's list also included:

- Ensuring adequate water supply for Gwinnett's booming population, partly through the Water Tower at Gwinnett, a water-focused research and training center
- Mobility, including a robust, high-quality transit system that serves Gwinnett's long-term needs
- Excellence in public safety by recruiting and retaining good people and hiring personnel that reflect Gwinnett's diversity
- Implementing a County trails master plan to add hundreds of miles of paths
- Responsible management of the County budget, including keeping the County's rare Triple-AAA bond rating

AROUND GWINNETT

Fill out the census, but watch for scammers

In mid-March, you'll receive your first invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. Your answers are safe and confidential with the U.S. Census Bureau, but some scammers may use the upcoming census as an opportunity to steal your personal information.

They may send you official-looking emails, but the Census Bureau doesn't send unsolicited emails. Nor will it ask for your Social Security number, your bank account or credit cards, or money or donations.

If a Census taker comes to your home, ask to see their ID badge bearing their photograph, a Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date. To verify their identity or to report suspected fraud, call 800.923.8282.

Gwinnett receives \$10,000 grant for community garden in Lawrenceville

Gwinnett County and the city of Lawrenceville received a \$10,000 grant from Food Well Alliance for a new community garden at Rhodes Jordan Park to provide vegetables to residents lacking access to nourishing food. The grant supports construction of the garden and development of an urban agriculture plan. Other programs will help connect the community to services, classes on healthy lifestyles, and offer social opportunities.

Multicultural Festival set for April 18

Gwinnett Police, County officials, and friends from across the globe will embrace our diversity at the annual Gwinnett Multicultural Festival and County Government Open House **April 18 from 10:00am to 2:00pm** at Pinckneyville Park in Berkeley Lake. Families can see exhibits and cultural performances from other countries, meet officers, and enjoy kids' activities such as a dunk tank, games, and inflatables. For more information, call 770.513.5119.

Tax Assessor's Office to issue Real Estate Property Annual Notices of Assessment

Most Residential and Commercial Annual Notices of Assessment for 2020 will be mailed April 3. An Annual Notice of Assessment is not a tax bill. The notice informs you of the value assessed on your residential or commercial real estate as of January 1, 2020.

You may appeal your value within 45 days of the date of your notice by visiting Gwinnett-Assessor.com or submitting a completed PT311A state appeal form to the Tax Assessor's Office.

Pay your water bill with your smartphone
Visit Gwinnetth2o.com using your smartphone to easily pay your water bill on the go. Just have your username or water account number and password ready. You can use this convenient service for non-recurring, one-time only payments.

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

A Colorful Eggs-perience

April 4 from 9:00am to 3:00pm
Rhodes Jordan Park
100 East Crogan Street, Lawrenceville

Haiku and Brew (tea)

April 17 from 6:00pm to 7:30pm
Norcross Senior Center
5030 Georgia Belle Court, Norcross

Splish Splash Night

April 24 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm
Mountain Park Aquatic Center
1063 Rockbridge Road, Stone Mountain

Master Gardeners Association Plant Sale

April 25 from 8:00am to 2:00pm
Lilburn Branch of the
Gwinnett County Public Library
4817 Church Street Northwest, Lilburn

Cooking on the Plaza: Canning 101

April 30 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center
2020 Clean Water Drive, Buford

GWINNETT COUNTY CONNECTION

Send questions or comments to
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Questions about your water bill?
Call 678.376.6700.



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Green makeover scheduled for multipurpose field at Shorty Howell park

Shorty Howell Park's multipurpose field is being upgraded to handle more use and to be more green. The project will tentatively kick off in April and is planned to be finished in October.

The \$1.65 million project includes replacing existing Bermuda grass with low-maintenance, more-durable synthetic turf, and replacing existing field lights with brighter and more energy-efficient LED fixtures. Natural grass requires recuperation and daily maintenance, unlike artificial turf. The new light fixtures are brighter, last longer, and use less electricity.

The renovation project features more LED fixtures to light previously unlit practice areas. It also has new concrete bleacher pads and walkways, picnic tables, team benches, and soccer and football goals. The improvements are funded by the 2017 SPLOST program.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Be wary of fraud this tax season

Tax season brings out scammers trying to con people out of their refunds and scare people into paying money they don't owe. The thieves often pose as government officials to intimidate or trick people into giving them money or access to bank accounts. Your phone may even show the caller is from the IRS.

The scammers will call, and in brisk, official tones, state that you owe back taxes and you must pay immediately or go to jail or pay substantial fines. They prefer a pre-loaded debit card or wire transfer for payment because they're like cash.

Be advised that the IRS will never:

- Call to demand immediate payment using a prepaid debit card, gift card, or wire transfer
- Threaten immediate arrest for not paying
- Demand payment without allowing questions or an appeal
- Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone

Never give the caller financial or personal information. If you've been victimized by a scammer, call 877.FTC.HELP right away or visit ftc.gov/complaint.

PROTECTING OUR RESOURCES



The Water Tower, Gwinnett's research and education center, launches hands-on training program in 2020

The Water Tower at Gwinnett, the new water research and education center, will begin training its first class of water professionals in 2020 to operate and maintain publically owned water and wastewater systems.

Working with research groups, universities, and international associations, the Water Tower will help guide policy makers across the globe to discover new ways to find, clean, and reuse water and to train the next generation of water professionals on using emerging technology. The Water Tower Field Training Center will open in the fourth quarter of this year.

The Water Tower's founding partner, the Georgia Association of Water Professionals, in conjunction with the Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources and the private sector, will augment an already robust training program by enabling prospective operators to gain on-the-job experience and helping practicing operators hone their skills and develop new expertise.

The Water Tower connects the classroom to field learning by offering real-world scenarios in a monitored environment with technical training on innovative technologies. Utility operator certification exams can be challenging; courses at the Water Tower will focus on specific areas of difficulty to ensure students are prepared to pass their exams.

Additionally, the Water Tower offers advanced training courses to enhance certified operators' knowledge of new technologies and techniques, such as maintenance technologist, wastewater treatment, and wastewater laboratory analyst courses. Classes begin soon. To learn more about upcoming training courses at the Water Tower, email Chad Willbanks at Chad@theh2otower.org or visit the website Theh2otower.org/training.

TAX COMMISSIONER

Reduce your tax bill – apply for homestead exemptions

The best way to reduce your property tax bill is to apply for a homestead exemption. You must own and occupy the home as of January 1 of the application year. In addition to the regular exemption, there are also several specialty exemptions available. To check eligibility and apply, visit GwinnettTaxCommissioner.com/Exemptions. The deadline is April 1.

CHECK IT OUT



Celebrate National Library Week

National Library Week is an annual celebration highlighting the valuable role libraries, librarians, and library workers play in transforming lives and strengthening our communities. This year's theme, "Find Your Place at the Library," shows how today's libraries are no longer just places for books, but provide resources for the communities they serve. You can apply for passports, borrow state park passes, prepare for GED and college entrance exams, and use Learning Labs to develop a business idea. Join us during National Library Week from April 19 – 25 to check out all the Gwinnett County Public Library system has to offer.

Department of Water Resources 2020

April Water Workshop

Spring Cleaning

Household Hazardous Waste Management

April 14 from 6:00pm to 7:30pm

Suwanee Library

361 Main Street, Suwanee

Learn how to identify, manage, and properly dispose of hazardous materials in your home.

Three ways to register:

Visit the Get Involved page at Gwinnett2o.com
Send an email with your name, address, and phone number to DwrWorkshops@GwinnettCounty.com
Call 678.376.7193