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November 2023



Greetings!

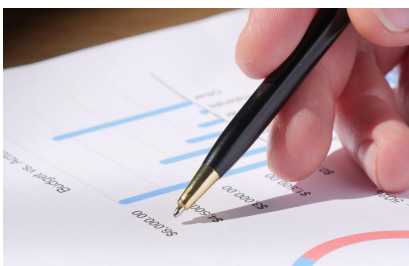
This fall, I've continued to tour the County, meeting our great employees and getting to know more about the great work they do every day.

During my recent visit with Vernon Sawyer, Division Director at the [Bill Atkinson Animal Welfare Center](#), there were several residents looking to adopt a new best friend. We're blessed to have such dedicated staff and volunteers who are so passionate about the animals being cared for at the shelter. I had an amazing time meeting these puppies, and I hope you stop by the shelter to visit next time you're looking to add a furry addition to your family.



I also want to thank everyone who came to our annual Veterans Day Ceremony on November 11 despite the cold and rainy weather. Thank you for helping show our support to the brave men and women who served our country through military service.

## Happening Around Gwinnett



### Proposed 2024 budget focuses on infrastructure, sustainability, and community health

Chairwoman Nicole Love Hendrickson presented her [proposed budget](#) on Tuesday to guide County government spending for the 2024 fiscal year. The proposed budget for 2024 totals \$2.5 billion. It consists of a \$1.96 billion operating budget and a \$542 million capital improvements budget, which includes funds from the County's Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax program. It addresses community needs like affordable housing and public safety as well as challenges facing county government including

hiring and retaining a qualified workforce.

We'll host a public hearing on Monday, December 4 at 6:30pm at the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center, and residents can share their [input on the County's website](#) through December 31. After hearing your input, the Board of Commissioners will consider the 2024 budget at their first meeting of the new year on January 2.

## Take a survey to help enhance our election processes

Gwinnett Voter Registrations and Elections values your feedback to help enhance our election processes and outreach initiatives. [Take a survey](#) in your language of choice to share how we can best serve and accommodate your needs. Your responses will be completely anonymous and will not be used for any other purpose than to promote strengthened voting processes for future elections.



## ¡Toma una encuesta para ayudar a mejorar nuestros procesos electorales!

La Inscripción de Votantes y Elecciones de Gwinnett valora sus comentarios para ayudar a mejorar nuestros procesos electorales e iniciativas de divulgación. [Toma una encuesta](#) en el idioma de tu elección para compartir cómo podemos servirte y acomodar tus necesidades. Tus respuestas serán completamente anónimas y no se utilizarán para ningún otro propósito más que el de promover procesos de votación fortalecidos para futuras elecciones.



## Join us on Thanksgiving night for the Lighting of the Tree

The annual Lighting of the Tree kicks off the holiday season on **Thursday, November 23** at the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse in downtown Lawrenceville.

From **5:30pm to 8:00pm**, enjoy live entertainment, kids' activities, a visit from Santa, and more. Following the event, explore the courthouse with self-guided tours and experience the magic of Santa's headquarters. Don't miss this treasured family tradition!

## New dates added! Help shape the 2045 Unified Plan

More events have been added this November and December! We want your ideas for improving our communities in Gwinnett. Join us at one of our Small Area Plan Charettes workshops or open houses to learn more and share your thoughts.

To learn how you can get involved at these fun, interactive events, visit [GwinnettCounty.com/2045UnifiedPlan](https://GwinnettCounty.com/2045UnifiedPlan).



## What's New in District 4



## Help Gwinnett Police fill the sleigh

Gwinnett Police are accepting toy donations for children ages 3 to 15 through **Friday, December 15**. Toys should be new, unwrapped, and priced at \$10 or more. Youth basketballs, footballs, and soccer balls are great gifts for teenagers. Toy weapons will not be accepted.

Donations can be dropped off at [Gwinnett Police Headquarters or any precinct lobby](#). For more information about the Fill the Sleigh Toy Drive, email [PDCommunityAffairs@GwinnettCounty.com](mailto:PDCommunityAffairs@GwinnettCounty.com).

## Learn about Ride Gwinnett Route 50

On November 20, there will be a new way to connect to your favorite places! Ride Gwinnett Route 50 will provide a connection from the Sugarloaf Mills Park and Ride through downtown Suwanee. It also includes connections to the Mall of Georgia, the Exchange at Gwinnett, and Coolray Field.

Get an early look at the new route by attending a [virtual meeting](#), and get ready to hop on just in time for holiday shopping!



## Volunteer at Gwinnett's warming stations



Gwinnett County is opening five warming stations for residents to receive temporary, overnight relief from long-term exposure to frigid temperatures. These warming stations will be operational from 6:00pm to 7:00am on nights when temperatures drop to 35 degrees or below, providing residents with a meal and a warm place to rest.

Find locations and the latest activation status at [GwinnettCounty.com/WarmingStations](https://www.gwinnettcountry.com/WarmingStations). To volunteer, call 770.822.8850 or email [OneStopHelp@GwinnettCounty.com](mailto:OneStopHelp@GwinnettCounty.com).

### Get assistance buying your first home

Is the cost of a down payment holding you back from purchasing your first home? As a first-time homebuyer, new or existing Gwinnett residents could qualify for Gwinnett's Homestretch Down Payment Assistance Program and receive down payment assistance of up to \$10,000 as a five-year deferred payment loan with zero percent interest. To see if you're eligible, visit [GwinnettCounty.com/HomestretchDPA](https://www.gwinnettcountry.com/HomestretchDPA).



## Special Events and Happenings

Visit [GwinnettCountyEvents.com](https://www.gwinnettcountry.com/Events) or follow the County's social media channels to learn about more upcoming events.

### STEAM Saturday

**Saturday, November 25 from 10:00am to 3:00pm**

Free! Challenge your student's imagination and creativity in our hands-on STEAM Lab. Students will participate in engaging learning activities that explore science, technology, engineering, art, and math. For ages 5 to 10. [Register online](#). Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center, 2020 Clean Water Drive, Buford.

### Reindeer Games

**Tuesday, December 5 from 10:00am to noon**

Join us for a winter wonderland of reindeer games, crafts, ornament decorating, and a treat station. For ages 2 to 5. Fee: \$11. [Register online](#). George Pierce Park Community Recreation Center, 55 Buford Highway in Suwanee.

### Comfort and Joys

**Thursday, December 7 from 11:00am to 1:00pm**

Free! Dress in your favorite holiday attire and enjoy an afternoon of board games and fellowship. Bring a new item to be donated to a local senior facility that may bring comfort and joy to others, like socks, tissues, lip balms, etc. Bring your own sack lunch. For ages 50 and up. [Register online](#). Bogan Park Community Recreation Center, 2723 North Bogan Road, Buford.

### Bogan Kids' Club: A Holiday to Remember

**Friday, December 8 from 6:00pm to 9:30pm**

Enjoy an evening of swimming, games, crafts, dinner, and fun! Kids should bring a swim suite, towel, and a change of clothes. For ages 6 to 12. Fee: \$8 per child. [Register online](#). Bogan Park Aquatic Center, 2723 North Bogan Road, Buford.

## Did You Know?



### Get to know Gwinnett Animal Welfare and Enforcement

Gwinnett Animal Welfare and Enforcement offers great service to our community, working diligently to uphold Gwinnett County animal welfare ordinances and comply with guidelines recommended by the National Animal Care and Control Association. It also operates the [Bill Atkinson Animal Welfare Center](#). The animal center found homes for more than 4,000 animals through adoptions and saved 96 percent of impounded animals in 2022.

All animals that arrive at the shelter are scanned for a

microchip and then held between three to 10 days (depending on ownership) before becoming available for adoption. This allows lost pets an opportunity to be reunited with their owners.

Adoption is an exciting and fulfilling way to add a loving pet to your family! [Learn more about adopting a pet from the Bill Atkinson Animal Welfare Center](#). Not ready to make a forever commitment? Consider [fostering](#) instead!



Matthew Holtkamp, District 4 Commissioner  
Gwinnett County

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