

gwinnettcounty **state of the county**

february 2010

Local Economy and Finances

- Population now stands at an estimated 789,499 residents, up 200,000 since the 2000 Census (*US Census estimate July 1, 2008*)
- Gwinnett lost more than 8,300 jobs, a decrease of 2.6 percent between 2007 and 2008, contrasted with a loss of 1.1 percent statewide (*Georgia Department of Labor*).
- Gwinnett had 296,213 jobs in the second quarter of 2009 (*latest figure available*), down 7.1 percent from the same quarter in the previous year
- Unemployment is 9.4 percent compared to 10.3 percent statewide, according to the Georgia Department of Labor (*seasonally adjusted data, December 2009*)
- Gwinnett received \$120 million in federal stimulus funding
- Record floods in September 2009 caused \$12.7 million in damage to County facilities (85 percent reimbursement expected from state and federal funds)

Excellent Credit History

- Gwinnett has maintained AAA credit ratings with Fitch Ratings, Moody's Investor Services, and Standard and Poor's for the past 13 years
- Only 23 counties nationwide can boast triple-AAA ratings
- Issued \$260 million of revenue bonds in 2009 through the water and sewer authority
- Excellent credit results in significant interest savings

Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax

- Voters approved 2009 SPLOST in November 2008 and collections began April 1, 2009
 - Expected to raise about \$785 million over five years
 - Transportation, public safety, park, library, and courthouse expansion projects
 - County portion budgeted conservatively at nearly \$600 million over the life of the program
 - Cities will share about \$122 million

2010 Budget

- \$1.3 billion budget (22 percent lower than 2009)
- Operating Budget of \$974.6 million includes hiring police officers and firefighters and preserves core services for residents
- Capital Budget of \$355.3 maximizes our buying power under the current economic conditions and defers projects with significant operating impacts
- 2009 millage rate increased by 2.28 mills to restore public safety and other key services but left most budget cuts in place for 2010
- Engage Gwinnett 42-member citizens committee began studying County service levels and funding strategies in 2009 and will make recommendations to commissioners in April 2010

Planning, Economic Development, and Revitalization

- 2030 Unified Plan adopted by Board of Commissioners
- Adopted and implemented five Tax Allocation Districts
- Received largest allocation of recovery zone bonds in Georgia to help attract quality new businesses to the area and assist existing companies with expansion plans
- Developed social media tool to share economic data
- Invested in two new computer systems to improve efficiency
- Rewrote Buffer, Landscape, and Tree Ordinance Handbook to focus on increased canopy requirements
- Increased compliance verification with International Energy Conservation Code
- Produced digital version of the official zoning map
- Attracted two Fortune 500 companies (NCR, Asbury Automotive)
- Partnership Gwinnett's 110 project wins have created 6,000+ jobs since 2007

Community Services

- Opened three large parks: Alexander, Harbins, Settles Bridge
- Freeman's Mill Park opened with historic mill and 12-acre park
- Leveraged volunteer and financial assistance:
 - Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center (GEHC) staff and volunteers had over 110,000 contact hours with students and citizens
 - Volunteers recorded 42,142 hours of work in parks and facilities (not including youth athletic association hours)
 - Health and human services volunteers logged more than 50,000 hours of service
 - Received \$100,000+ in private donations for senior services
- GEHC facility rentals were up 30 percent
- Recreation class, day camp, and special event participation increased by 12 percent
- Broke ground on new, federally-funded Senior Services Center
- Cooperative Extension Service presented 1,140 youth, family, and environmental programs
- Consolidated voting precincts due to increase in absentee and early voting, reduced overall costs in preparation for 2010 elections
- New Hamilton Mill Library opens in May 2010

Public Safety

- Corrections Complex became Georgia's only accredited government-owned prison
- Inmates removed 50,000 square-feet of graffiti and cleaned 5,000 miles of roads (offender labor totaled 270,000 hours, worth \$2.9 million)
- Federal 287g program showed 65 percent of foreign-born offenders in Gwinnett's jail were here illegally

- Built new Police Annex/E-911 Center
- Cleared 27 of 35 homicides, well above national average
- Targeted organized crime gang and arrested 25 for murder, armed robbery, kidnapping, and drugs
- Cleared 1,506 cases by arrest, up 25 percent in two years
- Criminal Investigations expanded Internet crimes against children activities, made 909 drug arrests, and seized \$46.5 million in illegal drugs
- Highway Interdiction Team made 5,830 traffic stops, issued 3,200 citations and 204 felony arrests, found 116 wanted missing persons, recovered 12 stolen vehicles and eight guns, seized \$620,000+ in drugs
- Enhanced public access to crime activity data by neighborhood with www.crimemapping.com
- Implemented new Criminal Justice Information System that facilitates arrest warrant exchanges and reduces warrant issue time to one minute
- Responded to 65,000+ fire and medical calls
- Completed four new fire stations (7, 18, 29, and 30)
- Placed new Medic Unit 28 and Basic Life Support Units 9 and 23 in service
- Added new programs: youth mentoring, senior safety and blood pressure screenings, bilingual CPR/first aid, and battalion-based fire and life safety curriculum (1,273 programs)
- Conducted 17,500+ fire-safety inspections
- Hosted Metro Atlanta Fire Leadership and Safety Conference

General Government

- Developed strategic information technology plan to guide and prioritize technology initiatives
- Built second data center and redundant fiber infrastructure for business continuity and disaster recovery
- Enhanced online job application/hiring process and service-request handling process
- Implemented online view/pay system for property tax bills
- Added collaboration and document management tools to intranet and new automated grants tracking system
- Improved credit card processing for online registrations, license renewals, and bill payments
- Relocated Peachtree Corners Tag Office
- Upgraded four fuel sites and formed fuel cooperative with other agencies for better pricing
- Conducted comprehensive utility rate analysis in all departments
- Developed Green Government/Green Communities strategy: lights out/power down program, Energy Star partnership, green fleet and anti-idling policy

Transportation

- Installed 35 miles of fiber optic cable and 50 cameras, connected 75 traffic signals to Automated Traffic Management System, and began six more projects along major corridors
- Opened Traffic Control Center during rush hours, special events, and emergencies
- Began Ronald Reagan Parkway extension feasibility study
- Bought 35 new buses and began mid-life overhaul of 28 local buses
- Initiated three express and local transit service-level reductions
- Added 70 parking spaces at Briscoe Field

- Spent \$110 million+ in SPLOST funds
- Completed 34 road improvement projects (178 in last five years)
- Entered 2010 with \$57 million in funds committed to road construction contracts
- Awarded \$90 million in federal stimulus dollars in for projects including State Route 324 bridge over I-85, McGinnis Ferry Road extension, State Route 20 widening (Ozora Road to Brand Road), and US 29 intersections at Pleasant Hill Road and Beaver Ruin Road
- Completed over 20 "Quick Fix" projects (original goal: 12)
- Resurfaced 100 miles of roads (\$10 million)
- Began building Sugarloaf Parkway extension section III (\$15.5 million)
- Developed and prioritized 2009 SPLOST Transportation Program with Citizens Project Selection Committee (including \$316.6 million in Tier I projects)

Water Resources

- Added online bill pay for water/sewer bills
- Improved billing, collection, refund, and adjustment accounting systems to enhance service and efficiency
- Completed reuse water pipeline to Lake Lanier and will begin recycling highly-treated reclaimed water to the lake in 2010
- Finished excavation of No Business Creek wastewater tunnel
- Continued upgrades at Yellow River Water Reclamation Facility
- Encouraged water conservation through public education efforts and toilet replacement rebate program; water production down 18 percent over 2007

Award-Winning Government

- National Association of Counties *Achievement Awards*: Funding Post Employment Benefits (*Best of Category*), Youth Firesetter Intervention, CPR/First Aid for Schools, Drought Relief with Recycled Water, Traffic Control Center, EXCEL Leadership Project
- *Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting and Distinguished Budget Presentation Award* from Government Finance Officers Association, *Excellence in Procurement Award* from National Purchasing Institute
- *2009 Volunteer of the Year* from Georgia Recreation and Park Association for Vines Garden Railroad, Park Pride *Inspiration Award*, American Society of Landscape Architects *Merit Award* for Peachtree Ridge Park
- *2009 Gwinnett Chamber Merit Award* for CPR/AED/First Aid Program; First Place at 2009 Climb Atlanta; Fire Public Information Officer Tommy Rutledge named *PIO of the Year* by Georgia Insurance and Fire Safety Commissioner
- Unified Plan named Georgia Planning Association *Outstanding Planning Document*; Georgia Urban Forestry Council award for increasing tree canopy, preserving specimen trees
- Gwinnett County Soil and Water Conservation District *Certificate of Achievement* for Erosion and Sediment Control Program, Atlanta Regional Commission *CREATE Community Award* for Drought Relief with Recycled Water
- National Association of County Information Officers *Awards of Excellence* and City-County Communications and Marketing Association *Silver Circle Award*
- Atlanta Business Chronicle *Best in Atlanta Real Estate Award* for Gwinnett Stadium
- Fleet received *2010 Blue Seal Award*, Police Annex/E-911 Center won American Concrete Institute *Award of Excellence*