



# State of the County

## Local Economy, Finances, and Gwinnett's Excellent Credit History

- Estimated 2012 population was 837,873 (*Moody's Analytics Forecast*)
- Gwinnett's employment totaled 406,711 in November 2012 (*Georgia Department of Labor, preliminary, not seasonally adjusted*)
- Gwinnett's unemployment rate was 7.1 percent in November 2012, compared to 8.3 percent statewide, marking 43 straight months that Gwinnett has had the lowest rate among the five core metro Atlanta counties (*Georgia Department of Labor, preliminary, not seasonally adjusted*)
- Gwinnett has maintained AAA bond ratings with Fitch Ratings, Moody's Investors Services, and Standard and Poor's since 1997
- Only 39 of the nation's more than 3,000 counties can boast triple AAA ratings
- Saved about \$2.2 million by refinancing 2003 General Obligation Bonds
- First large county and third overall to receive tax digest approval from the Georgia Department of Revenue

## Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST)

- 2009 SPLOST program forecast to raise \$688 million (April 2009 to March 2014)
- County proceeds designated for transportation, public safety, park, library, and courthouse expansion projects
- Gwinnett's cities are sharing an estimated \$100 million from 2009 SPLOST program
- 2001 SPLOST program closed in 2012 after raising \$496+ million for libraries, parks and recreation, public safety, transportation, and city projects
- Visit [www.gwinnettsplost.com](http://www.gwinnettsplost.com) for more information

your pennies  
at work



SPLOST

## Planning, Economic Development, and Revitalization

- Adopted 2030 Water and Wastewater Master Plan
- Developed Housing Task Force leading to the *HomeSafe Georgia* kickoff
- Implemented online plans submittal training including an online instructional video
- Encouraged redevelopment by amending development regulations
- Achieved substantial progress toward completion of Unified Development Ordinance

## 2013 Adopted Budget

- \$1.463 billion balanced budget: Operating Budget totals \$1.058 billion and Capital Budget totals \$404.7 million
- Shaped by loss of revenues from continued decline in tax digest, service-delivery agreements with cities, new state and federal mandates, and formation of City of Peachtree Corners
- Budget highlights: preserves core services; establishes new service district funds for police, fire/emergency medical, and development/code enforcement; no pay raises; adjusts employee benefits to absorb increase in required coverage; continues 90-day vacancies for positions; complies with all new state and federal mandates
- Anticipates an additional 2 percent drop in the value of the property tax digest in 2013
- Six residents and business people assisted Chairman Nash and County staff in prioritizing needs and allocating resources



## Community Services

- Cooperative Extension Service presented 1,291 programs on youth, family, and environmental issues
- Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center relocated two historic structures to its campus: Chesser-Williams House and Lee Barn
- Work got underway on an expansion of the federally funded Senior Services Center that includes a new kitchen for the home-delivered meals program
- Friends of Gwinnett County Senior Services raised more than \$150,000 for programs and services
- Five Forks Branch Library renovation funded by SPLOST was completed
- SPLOST-funded major park renovations and new parks opened: Rhodes Jordan Park, Vines Park, Bryson Park, and Yellow River Post Office historic site
- Purchased Fort Daniel historic site with SPLOST funds
- Parks and Recreation celebrated 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a countywide system
- Elections conducted eight elections and processed about 1.2 million voter transactions; there are 467,210 registered voters in Gwinnett County
- Community Services worked with almost 650 community partners to provide services
- Volunteers donated more than 940,000 hours of service

## Transportation

- Completed Sugarloaf Parkway Extension to State Route 316
- Began construction on Pleasant Hill Road at I-85 Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)
- Completed engineering and accepted bids on Jimmy Carter Boulevard at I-85 DDI
- Began Traffic Control Center (TCC) enhancements, including upgrades to GC Smart Commute
- Retimed 10 corridors with 108 signals and conducted 12 signal installations, eight signal rebuilds, and numerous signal modifications
- Completed two Intelligent Transportation Systems projects that added three miles of new fiber optic communication cable, installed 18 CCTV cameras, and connected 12 traffic signals to the TCC
- Upgraded links to seven cameras on State Route 20/Buford Drive and partnered with Georgia DOT Regional Traffic Operations to add three wireless cameras and five signals on U.S. 78 to connect to the TCC
- Completed 16 Quick Fix projects to improve traffic flow at various locations and three major projects in partnership with Georgia DOT: State Route 324 widening over I-85; State Route 20 widening south of Grayson; and McGinnis Ferry Road widening over the Chattahoochee River
- Began installation of new safety and security measures through Computer Aided Dispatch/Automated Vehicle Location for Gwinnett Transit
- Opened 25+ projects to traffic, with 20+ projects in design phase, and resurfaced 130 miles of roadway
- Completed engineering and land acquisition for widening State Route 20 in the Buford/Sugar Hill area including the new bridge over the Chattahoochee River



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## General Government

- State-administered *HomeSafe Georgia* mortgage assistance program kicked off in Gwinnett County
- Implemented solid waste and recycling changes in 2013, providing a 15 percent discount to qualified seniors and exempting vacant properties with valid permits from residential fees
- Reached service delivery agreement with 15 cities
- Launched *Volunteer Gwinnett* program to help the County provide valuable services; 991,122 volunteer hours exceeded the 2012 goal by nearly 40 percent
- Office of the Tax Commissioner achieved the highest property tax collection rate since 2004: 96.7 percent

Volunteers can find out about opportunities and sign up online at [www.volunteergwinnett.net](http://www.volunteergwinnett.net)



volunteer gwinnett

## Water Resources

- Expanded Yellow River Water Reclamation Facility ahead of schedule with savings of more than \$12.5 million
- Crooked Creek Water Reclamation Facility Phase II rehabilitation underway
- Lanier and Shoal Creek filter plants getting emergency back-up generators
- FOG and High-Strength Waste receiving station at F. Wayne Hill Water Reclamation Facility completed and in operation
- New mobile website allows water/sewer bill payments from smartphones – visit [www.gwinnetth2o.com](http://www.gwinnetth2o.com)

## Public Safety

- Hired 53 police officers and 32 firefighter/EMTs
- Fire Academy received full national accreditation for Paramedic training program
- Corrections complex received national reaccreditation
- Enhanced training program for cardiac emergencies launched in partnership with Gwinnett Medical Center
- Performed 11,883 fire and life safety inspections last year
- 911 Center dispatched 869,818 police calls and 79,292 fire/EMS calls
- Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center began monthly pet adoption promotions, contributing to a 28 percent increase in animals saved compared to two years ago
- Three license plate readers scanned more than 1.6 million tags, prompting 2,376 traffic stops, 2,738 citations, 201 misdemeanor arrests, 131 felony arrests, 33 stolen vehicles recovered, and 279 wanted persons located
- Solved 85 percent of homicides (national average: 64 percent)
- Corrections provided 205,000 hours of offender labor worth \$2 million to County departments, cities, and community improvement districts

## Green Government

- LEED® Gold certifications (sustainable building design): Gwinnett Senior Services Center and Yellow River Water Reclamation Facility operations center
- Certified silver level Green Community by the Atlanta Regional Commission
- 4,700+ elementary students used *Water on Wheels* program and 600+ residents attended *Homeowner H2O* water conservation workshops
- Replaced 2,600+ inefficient toilets through rebate programs, saving more than 29 million gallons annually, and diverted 116+ tons of porcelain from landfills for use as construction aggregate
- 550+ low-flow retrofit kits distributed free to customers

## Award-Winning Government

- *2012 Achievement Awards* from the National Association of Counties for online *Where Your Property Taxes Go* tax calculator, Parks and Recreation's TILT volunteer program, and the FLAME firefighter mentoring program for at-risk youth
- *2012 Georgia Counties of Excellence Awards* for Traffic Control Center and GC Smart Commute program from the Association County Commissioners Georgia
- Awards for website redesign, Corrections annual report, and Neighborhood Stabilization Program communications from the National Association of County Information Officers.
- Sheriff's Office received accreditation from the National Commission on Correctional Healthcare for jail health services
- Water Resources won *Gold Collection System of the Year* from the Georgia Association of Water Professionals and *2012 Stormwater Project of Excellence* for the North Fork Peachtree Creek Stream Restoration and Stormwater Wetland Project
- *Silver Excellence Award in Communication* to Solid Waste and Recovered Materials Division from Solid Waste Association of North America
- *Distinguished Budget Award* and *Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting* from the Government Finance Officers Association
- *Excellence in Youth Sports Award* from the National Alliance for Youth Sports
- Karina Miller Preserve Loop Trail at Little Mulberry Park in Dacula was named a National Recreation Trail
- Visit [www.gwinnettcountry.com](http://www.gwinnettcountry.com) to read about more award-winning programs, people, and services