

# News for Neighborhoods

A newsletter for gwinnettcounty homeowners

January 6, 2012

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## Dear Homeowner:

As a resident of Gwinnett County, you know there is always a lot going on in the community. [Gwinnett County Government](#) would appreciate your help keeping your neighbors informed by sharing the following information through your homeowner association newsletter, website, and e-mails and by talking to your friends and family. Click on *forward this e-mail to a friend* below to share this newsletter!

## Gwinnett adopts balanced budget

On January 3, the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners adopted a [balanced budget for 2012](#) that preserves core services and maintains access to amenities such as parks and libraries without anticipating a millage rate increase. The County plans to spend a total of \$1.3 billion, compared to \$1.5 billion last year.

Commission Chairman Charlotte Nash said the budget complies with all new state and federal mandates but otherwise includes no new or expanded services, no new positions and no pay raises. It also continues a policy of leaving positions that become vacant unfilled for a minimum of 90 days. The County also continues to strictly monitor its fleet vehicles and use existing vehicles longer. Other cuts came in the risk management and worker's compensation funds made possible by ongoing cost controls.

The cost of daily operations will total \$898 million, while capital improvements will cost another \$430 million. Read more on [www.gwinnettcounty.com](http://www.gwinnettcounty.com).



## Drop off your Christmas tree for recycling

Now that the holidays are over, don't forget to recycle your Christmas tree! Residents can drop off their live, undecorated trees at [various locations](#) through January 15. The trees will be chipped during Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful's *Bring One for the Chipper* event on January 21 at Bethesda Park in Lawrenceville. The mulch from the trees will be used for County parks and facilities.



Please note that unless you have a yard waste contract with your hauler, trees will not be collected curbside.

## County offices closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

All Gwinnett County government offices, with the exception of those operations required for the comfort and safety of the citizens of the county, will be closed Monday, January 16 for the Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday. All offices will resume regular working hours on January 17.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is not a trash and recycling holiday; haulers will follow the normal trash and recycling schedule the week of January 16.

## Gwinnett celebrates Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Join the United Ebony Society for their 12<sup>th</sup> annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration that opens with a program of essay readings and performances on Sunday, January 15 at 3:30pm at Meadowcreek High School located at 4455 Steve Reynolds Boulevard in Norcross. Then on Monday, January 16 at 10:00am the annual parade takes place at the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse in Lawrenceville. For more information, visit [www.unitedebonysociety.org](http://www.unitedebonysociety.org).

## Gwinnett County recycling statistics

With the countywide trash program in unincorporated Gwinnett, residents are doing their part to reduce their impact on the environment. Now more [items than ever can be recycled at the curb](#), and residents have recycled over 28,000 tons of waste since the solid waste program's start in July 2010.

Be a part of the initiative to reduce landfill space by recycling as many items as possible. You can print a [flyer](#) and place it on your refrigerator as a reminder of the many curbside recyclables (on recycled paper, of course). And don't worry; you'll make up for the paper used to print this flyer by recycling!



Remember: If you are able to recycle so [many additional items](#) that you can't fit everything in the recycling bin provided by your hauler, that's no problem and no extra charge. You can use additional bins, including your old 95-gallon trash cart, for recycling. Just make sure your bins are clearly marked "recyclables." Please note that your hauler can charge you for trash that exceeds your 95-gallon trash bin, but feel free to recycle as much as possible!

## Artworks! Gwinnett hosts inaugural awards ceremony

*Artworks! Gwinnett*, Gwinnett's arts consortium, is hosting its inaugural awards ceremony. After accepting public nominations and submissions, *Artworks! Gwinnett* will reveal the winners of artists with ties to the Gwinnett community on Monday, January 23 at the Hudgens Center for the Arts in Duluth to bring awareness to contributions being made to the arts in Gwinnett. More information, including how to get tickets, is available at [www.artworksgwinnett.org](http://www.artworksgwinnett.org).

## Donate heaters to keep Gwinnett's seniors warm

Electric portable heaters (UL tested) are needed to help keep Gwinnett seniors warm this winter - and you can help. [Gwinnett County fire stations](#) are accepting donations of new portable electric heaters through February 28, 2012. The heaters will be collected from the stations and personally delivered to seniors in need. A smoke detector and information on fire safety will also be included along with the heaters.

Project AWARE (Added Warmth Assistance for Residences of our Elderly) is in its third year of partnership between Gwinnett County Senior Services, its local nonprofit, Friends of Gwinnett County Senior Services, and Gwinnett County Fire and Emergency Services to provide heating assistance to senior citizens.

For seniors to be considered eligible to receive a heater, they should be 60 years or older, Gwinnett County residents, and undergoing a financial hardship. For more information about Project AWARE, please contact Adrienne Noble at 678.377.4150 or [adrienne.noble@gwinnettcountry.com](mailto:adrienne.noble@gwinnettcountry.com). You may also visit [www.fogcss.com](http://www.fogcss.com) to find out how you can help Gwinnett seniors through Friends.

## Mulch is beneficial to home landscaping

Using mulch in your home landscaping not only improves its beauty but also its health. Mulch reduces the loss of soil moisture to evaporation, making more moisture available to plants. Mulch improves the infiltration of water and its movement in the soil, adds organic matter to the soil, reduces erosion, and acts as a barrier to weeds. Fine textured organic mulches, such as pine straw, pine bark mini-nuggets, and shredded hardwood mulch are best at keeping moisture in the soil.



### Laying your mulch

Apply at least three to four inches of fresh pine straw around your shrubs or three inches of pine bark or shredded hardwood mulch. Around trees and shrubs, always pull the mulch two to three inches away from the main trunk. Avoid putting excessive amounts of mulch around the plants; this may cause the roots to grow mostly in the shallow upper layers of the soil due to their decreased ability to absorb oxygen and water. It may also increase the chances of stem and root rot diseases developing.

For more information, please call the Gwinnett Cooperative Extension at 678.377.4010 or visit [www.gwinnettextension.org](http://www.gwinnettextension.org).

## New school traffic light to be installed

Georgia DOT is widening State Route 20/Grayson Highway to a four-lane divided highway from Cooper/Ozora Roads to Brand Road, which includes access to Grayson High School. Gwinnett DOT is adding this new traffic light to increase the safety of parent and student drivers as they travel to and from school.



Beginning with the afternoon school release on January 12, a new traffic signal will operate weekdays during peak school hours from 6:30am - 8:00am and 1:30pm - 3:00pm. The signal will start to flash on January 9. Please note, these dates are contingent upon Georgia DOT's road construction schedule moving ahead as planned. The signal was originally planned to begin on January 3 but has been delayed a week due to changes in Georgia DOT's road construction schedule.

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