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January 4, 2013

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#### Dear Emily,

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 emails and by talking to your friends and family.

 Forward to a Friend

#### Gwinnett board adopts balanced budget

On January 3, the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners adopted a balanced budget for fiscal year 2013. The budget totals \$1.463 billion, which is 7.1 percent lower compared to last year's budget. It was prepared with input from six county residents and business people who served on the Chairman's budget review committee and worked alongside elected officials and County staff to review departmental business plans and projected revenues.



The budget preserves core services, maintains necessary reserves and addresses changes in legislation. It also adjusts for the loss of revenues resulting from a drop in property values, changes mandated by the consent order that ended the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) litigation between the County and its cities, and the creation of the new city of Peachtree Corners.

The budget also includes increased revenue from the E-911 and streetlight fees, which the Board adjusted prior to the end of 2012 in order to keep those funds self-supporting. County revenues are down about \$274 million since the recession began in 2008 due to a 25 percent decline in taxable property values, which puts the current tax digest at the 2005 level. Even as property values have declined, Gwinnett's population has continued to expand, growing by about 130,000 residents between 2005 and 2012.

#### 2013 Property taxes

Commissioners will set the millage rate for property taxes this summer, after assessments and appeals are completed in the spring. A millage rate will be associated with each of the new service districts; rates will depend on a property's location, which determines what services are provided by the County.

Under current estimates, the rate for residents who live in unincorporated Gwinnett County will increase by less than 1 mill, while residents in cities that operate a police department will

experience a more than 1 mill decrease. Residents of cities that do not operate a police department should see an increase of less than .5 mill. The greatest reduction in rates will occur within the city of Loganville, where property owners will pay County taxes only for the general fund, recreation district, and general obligation debt.

[Read more](#) about the 2013 budget at [www.gwinnettcountry.com](http://www.gwinnettcountry.com).

### Recycle your Christmas tree



After the holidays, turn your Christmas tree into mulch for Gwinnett County parks. Drop off your live trees now through **January 18** at one of the many locations in Gwinnett. Visit [www.gwinnettcountry.com](http://www.gwinnettcountry.com) to see a [list of locations](#). Remember to remove all decorations and lights from your tree.

Once the trees are collected, community volunteers will chip them into mulch at Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful's annual Bring One for the Chipper event on January 26 from 9:00am to noon at Bethesda Park in Lawrenceville. If you're interested in volunteering at this event, visit [www.gwinnettcbo.org](http://www.gwinnettcbo.org) or call 770.822.5187.

### New motor vehicle title tax effective March 1

Effective March 1, 2013, *House Bill 386* removes the sales tax and the annual ad valorem tax on newly purchased vehicles. It replaces these taxes with a new title tax of 6.5 percent in 2013. Here's what you need to know:



- If you purchase a vehicle on or after March 1, 2013, you will pay the new **title tax** to the tag agent in the county in which you register the vehicle. You pay when you apply for the title and register the vehicle.
- The new title tax is not due every year but is due each time the vehicle is sold and titled. It applies to dealer sales as well as **sales between individuals**.
- The new title tax is based on a percentage (6.5 percent in 2013) of the **fair market value** of the vehicle, not the sales price, as determined by the Georgia Department of Revenue.
- You will continue to pay the annual ad valorem tax on vehicle(s) that you currently own.
- If you purchase a vehicle in Georgia between January 1, 2012, and March 1, 2013, (when the new program begins) you have the option of paying the new title tax instead of the current annual ad valorem tax. You have from March 1, 2013, until December 31, 2013, to opt into the new program. **Note: Vehicles purchased out-of-state are not eligible to opt in.**
- All other existing annual vehicle registration requirements, including annual tag renewal fees, decals, and emission tests (if applicable), remain in effect for all vehicle owners.

For more information and a title tax calculator, visit [www.GwinnettTaxCommissioner.com](http://www.GwinnettTaxCommissioner.com).

### Are you in a floodplain?



The risk of your home or business flooding during severe weather is often impacted by land development and land use activities within the surrounding local area.

Please visit the [Floodplain Information Portal](#) to check if your home or business is in or near a floodplain and whether you should consider getting flood insurance.

## An Engaging Affair bridal show | January 13

If you are looking to get married in Gwinnett, be sure to come to [An Engaging Affair bridal show](#) at the [Gwinnett Historic Courthouse](#), located at 185 Crogan Street in Historic Downtown Lawrenceville.

On **Sunday, January 13** from **1:00pm to 4:00pm**, you can hear from bakers, wedding planners, caterers, and DJs and have the chance to win door prizes. Tickets are \$6 in advance or \$7 at the door, but grooms are free!



## Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning in your home



The weather is much colder outside, and that means people are using their heaters to stay warm. [Fire and Emergency Services](#) wants you to avoid being a victim of carbon monoxide poisoning while heating your home this winter.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas that is hard to detect and can cause illness or possibly death before you know it's there. Carbon monoxide comes from incomplete combustion of gas or oil-fired appliances such as furnaces, dryers, wood-burning stoves, fireplaces, and car engines. A high percentage of carbon monoxide poisonings are from home heating systems that are not properly installed or maintained.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are often mistaken for those accompanying the flu, which include headache, nausea, confusion, dizzy spells, and fatigue. If you feel the effects of carbon monoxide poisoning, go outside to fresh air immediately and seek medical attention. Remember to call 911 to report a carbon monoxide leak as well as any exposure symptoms.

Here are some tips to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning in your home:

- Make sure that all home heating appliances are installed according to the manufacturer's instructions. Be sure to have it checked each year by a certified technician before the temperature outside starts to drop.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector in the hallway near the bedrooms and on every level of the home. Make sure that everyone in the household knows the sound of the carbon monoxide detector and the smoke detector. If the carbon monoxide detector goes off, don't ignore it; hit the reset feature on your detector and if it goes off again, evacuate immediately and call 911.
- Never use gasoline-powered tools and engines (such as generators) indoors. Generators should be placed outdoors away from the structure in a well-ventilated area.
- Do not burn charcoal or use portable fuel-burning camping equipment inside a house, garage, vehicle, or tent.
- Avoid using gas appliances such as ranges, ovens, or clothes dryers to heat your home.
- If you have to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it and make sure that the exhaust pipe is not obstructed.
- When using the fireplace, remember to open the flue for adequate ventilation.

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