

County Line

a monthly publication for gwinnett county employees

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County to construct new DMVS customer service center

Gwinnett County officials will help the state Department of Motor Vehicle Safety achieve their goal to improve customer service and efficiency with construction of a new Motor Vehicle Customer Service Center in Lawrenceville. The new center will replace the existing driver's licensing facility on Swanson Drive.

The \$3 million center will be located on Hurricane Shoals Road at the corner of Hosea Road, adjacent to the future site of Gwinnett County's new fire administration building. The 2001 special purpose local option sales tax will fund construction of the center out of the allocation for public safety.

Preliminary plans for the new driver's licensing facility call for an approximately 11,500-square-foot building, 200 parking spaces, and a 52,500-square-foot driving course for on-site testing. The new facility will offer stations for 16 customer service representatives. In addition, 20 individual, computer-based testing stations will be available.

"The center on Swanson Drive is inadequate to serve the needs of our growing county. In response, we are going to do our part to help residents obtain and renew driver licenses in an efficient manner, in a new and inviting facility," said Gwinnett County Commission Chairman **F. Wayne**

Hill. "Following architectural design and an approximate 12-month construction period, we expect the facility will begin operating in late 2004."

"We are very pleased with the help and support we are receiving from the Gwinnett County Commission," said Department of Motor Vehicle Safety Commissioner **Tim Burgess.** "This new partnership with Gwinnett County, in addition to the customer service facility we recently opened on Beaver Run Road, means that citizens of Gwinnett will receive the highest possible level of service when they go to renew their driver's license with DMVS."

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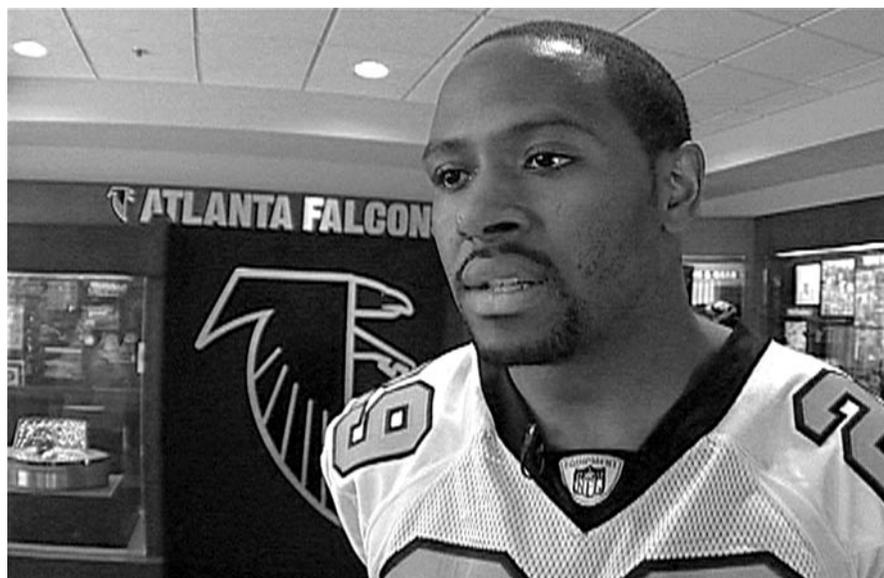
Free books for one-year-olds



Falcons DB delivers on and off the field

by Gary M. Galloway, Department of Community Services

Imagine your surprise if, as an elderly homebound Gwinnett County Meals on Wheels client, your delivery volunteer was wearing an authentic Number 29 Atlanta Falcons jersey! That is Falcons safety Keion Carpenter, a star defensive back in his first season in Atlanta after several pro seasons in Buffalo. He is continuing to give back to people by spending much of his free time involved with programs that help to better his community.



"Our owner, Mr. Arthur Blank, is so committed to having us help our com-

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Keion Carpenter of the Atlanta Falcons pledges to donate funds for every interception made by the team throughout the season.



Annual candlelight vigil held for crime victims

Law enforcement officers, prosecutors, victim advocates, and a host of surviving family members came together the night of December 12 to memorialize those who lost their lives to violent crime over the past year. The Crime Victims Candlelight Vigil is an annual event sponsored by the Gwinnett County District Attorney's Office Victim Witness Program to memorialize those victims and honor their survivors. The event was held at the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center.

Speakers for the event included District Attorney Danny Porter, United States Congressman John Linder, and nine-year-old Kristen Woods, who read a poem she wrote about her father who had been killed in a vehicular homicide.

"This event gives us an opportunity to reach out to the families of those people whose lives were cut short due to criminal acts," said **Stan L. Hall**, Director of the Victim Witness Program. *"It affords them an opportunity for recognition of their losses and to let them know that the community has not forgotten them."*

The Hopewell Baptist Church choir performed just before the ceremony ended with a candle lighting in remembrance of the crime victims. The names of this year's victims were read with a ceremonial "ringing of the bell" for each victim. In 2002, 19 people were killed in Gwinnett County as a result of homicides.

The Gwinnett County Victim Witness Program is the second oldest program of its type in the state of Georgia. The program made more than 30,000 victim contacts in 2002.



Fire and Emergency Services employees **John Whetstine, Steve Brown, Scot Edling, Joe Poe, Jeff Kendrick, Rod Dawson, Eric Jensen, and Phillip Dixon** help break ground on Fire Stations 5 and 25 during a ceremony held on December 3. The relocation of Fire Station 5 from Club Drive to Old Norcross Road will replace an aging building. Fire Station 25 will be located on Highway 29 near the intersection of Ronald Reagan Parkway and will be the County's newest fire facility. The two stations, which will better serve and protect Gwinnett County citizens, are expected to open late this year.



Attention Gwinnett County taxpayers

NEW MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE LAWS FOR THE NEW YEAR

In compliance with legislation passed by the Georgia General Assembly this year, motor vehicle insurance laws will change as of February 1, 2003. This legislation will affect your tag transactions and how your tag renewal is processed.

Beginning February 1, 2003, when you process a tag transaction that requires insurance verification, such as a tag renewal, the County Tag Office will no longer be able to accept an insurance card as proof of insurance. The insurance information verification will be accomplished by the State Tag and Title Registration system electronically matching the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) that was provided by your insurance agent to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety database. This means the VINs must match.

The Vehicle Identification Number on your vehicle, the VIN on your current insurance card and the VIN on your current registration card must all match exactly to ensure the State's computer system reflects correct information!

Don't wait until February. Check now!

If the VIN on your insurance card is incorrect you need to contact your insurance agent immediately. If the VIN on your current registration is incorrect you need to contact the County Tag Office immediately. This will allow time for the corrections to be made prior to February 1, 2003.

For additional information please visit Motor Vehicle/Auto Tags at www.gwinnetttaxcommissioner.com or call 770.822.8818.

HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION FILING BEGINS

The 2003 homestead exemption filing season began January 2, 2003. A regular homestead exemption and value offset exemption is available to all homeowners who occupy their property as their primary residence. It is not applicable to rental property or vacant land. Other exemptions are also available to senior and disabled homeowners. The deadline for filing is May 1, 2003.

MOBILE HOME TAX BILLS MAILED THIS MONTH

Mobile home tax bills will be mailed on January 15, 2003. The deadline for payment is May 1, 2003.

For more information about homestead exemption or mobile home taxes, you may call the 24-hour customer service line at 770.822.8800 or e-mail Property_Tax@co.gwinnett.ga.us.

Meet Robert Brannen, the new head of Extension Service

by Kendra Young, Communications Intern

Robert Brannen is the new Gwinnett County Cooperative Extension Service Coordinator for Gwinnett County. Brannen, who holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in economics from the University of Georgia, has worked in the Extension Service Division as a County Extension Agent since July 1994. He came to Gwinnett after performing a similar job with Fulton County.

His new position includes supervising 14 employees, division programs, and more of the administrative duties of division. "The Extension Service is a cooperative effort between Gwinnett County and the University of Georgia," said Brannen when asked to explain how the division fits into the scope of both UGA and Gwinnett County. "We bring educational resources and services from the University to the people in Gwinnett County."

Brannen speaks highly of the established programs in Gwinnett County, especially a youth development program called Gwinnett Youth Leadership. "High school students



Robert Brannen

are taken on a two-day retreat to learn leadership skills," said Brannen. "They then research and write proposals on important issues in Gwinnett and recommend how local problems could be solved." Last year five Gwinnett legislators attended a public presentation to hear the students' proposals.

Other Extension Service efforts include 4-H and Youth Development and the popular Master Gardener programs. "We have learned to stretch our resources by training and utilizing volunteers. Each year, Master Gardeners and 4-H volunteers contribute literally thousands of hours to improving the quality of life in Gwinnett County," Brannen said.

FALCON DELIVERS

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munity, and since I have been involved in community outreach throughout my career, I believe that helping out is beautiful thing," Carpenter stated.

In addition to practice, game film study, and strength training, Carpenter is now connecting with needy seniors by supporting Meals on Wheels in Gwinnett. Carpenter said, "The Meals on Wheels program is special to me – something that you know is making a difference in lives. That's why I have been involved and that's why I'm on board with one of the premier Meals on Wheels programs in the region. I've made a financial pledge to donate funds for every interception made by our team, not just myself, for the entire season!"

Keion Carpenter's commitment is deeply appreciated, since it comes at a time when the waiting list for Meals on Wheels food delivery has crept up to over 100 names.

Check it out!

Happy 2003! Let some dummies help you keep those New Year's Resolutions. These selections are just a few of the many popular titles available in the "...for dummies" series.

Investing Online for Dummies, by Kathleen Sindell

Yoga for Dummies, by Georg Feuerstein

Organizing for Dummies, by Eileen Roth

Stress Management for Dummies, by Allen Elkin

Pilates for Dummies, (videorecording)

Personal Finance for Dummies, by Eric Tyson

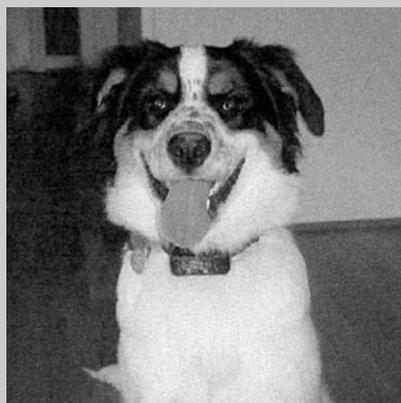
Weight Training for Dummies, by Liz Neporent

Time Management for Dummies, by Jeffrey Mayer

Poetry for Dummies, by The Poetry Center

List provided by Gwinnett County Public Library. Call or visit one of the library's 11 branches for additional selection assistance or visit the Web site at gwinnettpl.org!

Pet Corner



The DeWitt family adopted this delightful puppy named Reese from the Gwinnett County Animal Control Shelter. Reese was a small puppy that has grown a lot under the love of a new family. They sent before and after pictures to the shelter to show how much Reese has grown.

Are you looking for an addition to your household that will give you unconditional love and affection? You need to look no farther than the Gwinnett County Animal Control Shelter where you can adopt one of the cats and dogs they have available. Dogs and cats are also available for adoption every Sunday from 1:00pm – 5:00pm at the Petsmart near the corner of Ga Hwy 120 and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road in Lawrenceville.

If you'd like to see photos of pets currently up for adoption, go to www.co.gwinnett.ga.us. You can also visit the shelter at Hi-Hope Road and Georgia 316 in Lawrenceville or call 770.339.3200.





AROUND GWINNETT – JANUARY

Registration for **Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Winter Classes** begins on January 6. Hundreds of recreation classes for adults and children are offered this winter. A registration form and a complete listing of classes can be found in the winter edition of Gwinnett L.I.F.E. (Leisure is for Everyone), which is mailed to every household in Gwinnett on a quarterly basis. Gwinnett L.I.F.E. is also available at Gwinnett County Parks, libraries, and high schools. Call 770.822.8840 or visit www.co.gwinnett.ga.us.

Registration for **swim lessons** will take place on January 11 from 10:00am until noon at the Bogan Aquatic Center in Buford, the Collins Hill Aquatic Center in Lawrenceville, and at Mountain Park Pool in Lilburn. Sign up in person at the pool where you plan to take lessons. Lessons will take place from January 20 – February 13 and the cost is \$45. Call Bogan at 770.614.2063, Collins Hill at 770.237.5647, or Mountain Park at 770.564.4650.

AARP 55 Alive Defensive Driving will have a two-day refresher course on January 14 and 16 at the Gwinnett Senior Center at Bethesda Park in Lawrenceville. Class is from 9:30am – 1:30pm for ages 50 and older. Call 770.564.4680.

January 17 is the deadline to sign up for the **Okefenokee Swamp Trip**. This unforgettable three-day trip to the Okefenokee Swamp is from January 24-26. Participants are responsible for their own transportation, food, and equipment (except stoves and lanterns). Cost is \$60 and includes camping, boating, and parking fees. Call 770.932.4460.

Pajama Party Fright Night will take place on January 24 at the Pinckneyville Community Center. Get warm and cozy in your pajamas and enjoy an evening of ghost stories. The “*Not So Scary Tales*” begin at 7:00pm and “*Scary Tales*” begin at 8:00pm. Admission is \$4 per ticket for one show and \$3 per ticket for both shows. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Call 770.417.2200.

Happy first birthday: One-year-olds get free book

All one-year-olds in Georgia can now receive a free book at their local library on or after their first birthday. Parents can bring in their birthday boy or girl to receive a copy of **Old MacDonald** by Rosemary Wells. While visiting the library, parents can learn more about the children's collection and children's programming such as story time.

The library is providing the books through the “One, Two, Three” component of the Georgia Assisting Childhood Education Program (ACE). ACE combines state government funds for books and parenting aids with the resources and services of local public libraries, schools, health departments, adult education programs, hospitals, and the media to encourage all families to participate in daily literacy activities in their homes. “One, Two, Three” will encourage family literacy by distributing books to all one-year-olds and their families through Georgia public libraries, including the Gwinnett County Public Library.

JUST THE FACTS

A connection is made in a child's brain when a parent or caregiver reads a story to a child or has a conversation with her. A connection is reinforced with repetition. Repetition is how children make learning permanent and it is a critical part of a child's journey to knowledge. Each time a child hears the same story, she learns something new. (Source: *Better Brains for Babies*, www.bbbgeorgia.org)

Reading to young children promotes language acquisition and correlates with literacy development and, later on, with achievement in reading comprehension and overall success in school. The percentage of young children read aloud to daily by a family member is one indicator of how well young children are prepared for school. (Source: *National Center for Education Statistics*, <http://nces.ed.gov>)

Family participation in literacy activities provides valuable developmental experiences for young children. In addition to developing an interest in reading, children who are read to, told stories, and visit the library may start school better prepared to learn. Engaging young children in literacy activities

at home also enables parents and other family members to become active participants in their children's education at an early age. (Source: *National Center for Education Statistics*, <http://nces.ed.gov>)

To pick up a copy of **Old MacDonald** for your one-year-old or to learn more about other family literacy resources and programs, contact the Gwinnett County Public Library at 770.822.4522 or www.gwinnettpl.org.

History of Gwinnett County, Georgia, 1818-1993 Vol. III

Compilation and maps by Marvin Nash
Worthy, Gwinnett County Historian

Subjects of Interest

- Early Gwinnett County
- Census Records
- Pioneer Family Histories
- Records of Marriages
- Militia Districts
- Photos and Maps
- Special Dedication Page
- Cherokee Land /Gold Lottery

Call 770.822.7119 for more information.

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