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March 1, 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.



Adopt a pet today!

If you are looking for a companionable addition to your household, you will find lots of adorable cats, dogs, puppies, and kittens at the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center.

Visit www.gwinnettanimalcontrol.com to see photos of all the critters currently up for adoption, drop by the shelter located at 884 Winder Highway in Lawrenceville, or call 770.339.3200. To prevent pet overpopulation, all cats and dogs are spayed or neutered before adoption.



SR 316 traffic moves overnight Saturday

The Georgia Department of Transportation is moving State Route 316 traffic at its intersection with State Route 20 overnight Saturday, March 2, if weather permits. Traffic will be moved from SR 316's normal path to temporary lanes on the outside of the current lanes. These temporary lanes will eventually be ramps for the new interchange.

Overnight lane closures and traffic pacing will begin at 9:00pm Saturday, and by Sunday morning, traffic will be moved. Georgia Department of Transportation is advising drivers to exercise caution, slow down, and pay special attention the directional signs and barrels.

Once the intersection construction is complete, drivers will be able to access SR 316 from Collins Hill Road and SR 20 on ramps instead of through the existing traffic signal intersections.



The project is expected to be complete on December 31, 2014. More information on the project can be found on the [Georgia Department of Transportation's website](#).

New motor vehicle title tax effective today

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.

Reduce Your Tax Bill: Apply for Homestead Exemptions



The best way to reduce your property tax bill is to apply for homestead exemptions. The application deadline is **April 1**. For all exemptions, you must own and occupy the property as your primary residence as of January 1 of the tax year for which application is being made. **Applications for 2013 exemptions will not be accepted after April 1.**

You may apply online at our website or contact the Property Tax Department for an application. If you mail the completed application, we recommend using

certified mail; the signed certified signature card, along with a postmark on or before the deadline, will serve as proof of timely application. Once granted, the homestead exemption is automatically renewed each year.

To find out more about the 14 exemptions available and eligibility requirements, visit www.GwinnettTaxCommissioner.com or contact the Tax Commissioner's Office at tax@gwinnettcounty.com or 770.822.8800.

DDI construction impacts I-85

Intermittent lane closures and up to three lanes of traffic shifts will take place on I-85 at Pleasant Hill Road from March 1 to approximately March 22, weather permitting. Pleasant Hill Road from Breckinridge Boulevard/Shackleford Road to Venture Parkway will continue to require intermittent lane closures and traffic shifts through September 2013.



Lane closures on I-85 will take place from 8:00pm to 5:00am Sunday through Thursday, 8:00pm Friday to 7:00am Saturday, and 8:00pm Saturday to 9:00am Sunday. Pleasant Hill Road closures will take place between 9:00am and 4:00pm and 9:00pm and 6:00am.

Gwinnett County is continuing the construction of converting the existing the Pleasant Hill Road bridge over I-85 into a Diverging Diamond Interchange, or DDI. The DDI's innovative design relieves congestion, improves safety and is less expensive than replacing or widening the bridge. A DDI shifts traffic to the opposite side of the road, making left turns onto the interstate easier and improving the flow of traffic across the bridge. Find out more about how to drive the diamond at www.gwinnettDDI.com.

County offers free storm spotter classes

County offers free storm spotter classes. Weather forecasts are great, but when severe weather moves into our area, the National Weather Service relies on trained weather spotters to help keep them abreast of developing trends and situations. Weather radar is an excellent tool, but it only tells part of the storm's story. Combining radar data with observations from trained observers gives the best possible picture of severe storms.

The National Weather Service, in partnership with the Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management, will present a free severe weather program on Monday, March 4 at 7:00pm in the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center auditorium located at 75 Langley Drive in Lawrenceville. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

The classes will be taught by Barry Gooden, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. "This informative class will focus on how to spot dangerous weather, particularly tornadoes and severe thunderstorm conditions," said Greg Swanson, Gwinnett Emergency Management director. "Participants will learn what a severe storm is, the structure of a severe storm, how it develops, and how to inform the National Weather Service of severe weather." Even if you don't want to become an active storm spotter, you will learn about how storms work and the visual clues to identify severe storms in your area. Pre-registration is requested to reserve a space; call 770.513.5600 or email ema@gwinnettcounty.com to register.

Cooperative Extension 2013 Plant Sale

Winter is the perfect time to plan your spring garden, and the [Cooperative Extension Service](#) wants to help by offering locally grown plants during its annual plant sale. So walk your landscape and envision where you could place some delicious blueberries, apples, figs, or maybe some beautiful azaleas or gardenias.

Orders must be placed by March 12, and the pickup date is March 21 at the Gwinnett County Fairgrounds. See a [list of the plants](#) for sale and basic information about each plant.



Print an [order form](#) or call 678.377.4010 for more information.

Lawrenceville calls on residents to clean up

The city of [Lawrenceville](#) is participating in Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful's [Great American Cleanup Gwinnett Challenge](#) during March, April, and May. The goal is to revitalize neighborhoods by engaging residents and encouraging them to clean up their neighborhoods. Here's how you can participate:

- **Apply for a grant:** Lawrenceville has established a [Neighborhood Grant Application](#). All projects for grant consideration must begin after March 1, 2013. Neighborhoods can even apply for a matching grant from the city for a project improvement. Detailed regulations and criteria can be found in the application.
- **Win cash:** Any resident can create their own project and compete for the cash prize offered by Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful for projects that promote beautification. Rules and regulations are at www.gwinnettcb.org.
- **Get a dumpster:** From March to May, your homeowners association or a group of neighbors within the Lawrenceville city limits can request a dumpster to be placed in your neighborhood for a weekend to collect and remove unsightly items. Please note that paint and tires cannot be accepted. Submit your dumpster request to tommy.mcdaniel@lawrencevillegaweb.org.
- **Volunteer:** Lawrenceville is also looking for volunteers to help with cleanup projects for specific areas of the city. Any civic group, scout organization, or college or high school team interested in lending a helping hand can email Mayor Judy Jordan Johnson at judyjordan.johnson@lawrencevillegaweb.org or sign up with Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful to volunteer with the Great American Cleanup.

gwinnettcounty
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