



# County Line

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## Bay Creek Park: Gwinnett celebrates first handicapped-accessible ball field

by Kinsey Hansel, Communications Division

Celebrate the grand opening of Bay Creek Park on March 27! The 153-acre park features seven baseball/softball fields, a football field, two playgrounds, a paved multi-purpose trail, and a lighted track around the football field.

Bay Creek Park is also home to Gwinnett County's first handicapped-accessible ball field and playground for children with special needs. The playground, **Unity Place**,

was funded through a partnership between the Parks and Recreation department, the Grayson Athletic Association, and 10 Gwinnett-area Rotary clubs. The Special Populations Program offers baseball, softball, cheerleading, and basketball to children and young adults with special needs.

"Seeing the smiles and pride on the children's faces when they see their accessible field for the first time and hearing the laughter of the children on the playground will be truly amazing," said **Cathy Smith**, Unity Place

volunteer, "We are so grateful to Chairman Hill, Phil Hoskins and Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation, and the Gwinnett County Rotary Clubs for giving our children the chance to just be kids!"

The grand opening celebration will include a 5K run at 8:00am, followed by a grand opening ceremony at 10:00am. The fun and festivities will continue until 4:00pm, with pony rides and other activities.

Bay Creek Park is located at 143 Ozora Road in Grayson.

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## Chairman Hill named "Citizen of the Year"

The Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce named Gwinnett County Commission Chairman **F. Wayne Hill** "Citizen of the Year" at the Chamber's 56<sup>th</sup> annual meeting on January 30, 2004. The Citizen of the Year award is based on service to the community above and beyond excellence in one's own profession, business, service, or enterprise.

Chamber President Jim Maran described Hill as the embodiment of Gwinnett's motto, "Success Lives Here," and stated that Hill, who is

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## Mountain Park Aquatic Center opens with a big splash



Parks and Recreation celebrated the grand opening of the new Mountain Park Aquatic Center on February 14. More than 1,100 people showed up to make a splash in the new facility, which includes a 25-meter competition pool, a diving well, and a warm water pool for water aerobics, swim lessons, and water therapy. The new aquatic center, located on Rockbridge Road near Mountain Park Park, is Gwinnett County's third indoor aquatic center.



## County promotes new communications director

After a three-year search for a new Communications Director, the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners decided to retain the leadership already in place in the Communications Division. **Joe Sorenson** was named Communications Director effective January 17, 2004. In that role, Sorenson manages the Board of Commissioners' communication channels to Gwinnett citizens, including Web, television, and printed materials.

Sorenson, who has been with the County since graduating from the University of Georgia in 1991, assumed the role of Acting Communications Director three years ago. During his 12 years of service to Gwinnett County he has worked in various communication roles, including overseeing the development of the County's government access cable channel (TV Gwinnett, Channel 23) and the County government Web site, [www.gwinnettcountry.com](http://www.gwinnettcountry.com).

*"Joe has done a wonderful job as acting director and there is no doubt he will continue to serve as a strong leader in the Department of Support Services,"* said **Connie Hinson**, director of Support Services, *"I feel confident that under Joe's leadership the Communications Division will continue to expand and improve the ways in which Gwinnett County communicates with its citizens."*



## Red light camera system demonstration launched

Gwinnett County is proceeding with a red light camera system demonstration project being called *Safe Intersection*. Norcross-based LaserCraft has agreed to provide a system to Gwinnett County for a 60-day demonstration that will allow County officials to assess the need for a red light camera system in Gwinnett County and determine what resources would be required to operate such a system.

Based on crash data, the intersection of Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Singleton Road was selected for the demonstration project. The system will monitor the eastbound lanes of Jimmy Carter Boulevard. No citations will be issued during the demonstration project.

Red light camera systems are designed to decrease the number and severity of accidents and increase pedestrian safety. Systems in use throughout the country have proved an effective method to reduce crashes at intersections.

The Gwinnett County Police Department is providing a telephone line for citizens to comment on the camera system, 770.513.5880. Information about red light camera systems also can be found on Gwinnett County's Web site, [www.gwinnettcountry.com](http://www.gwinnettcountry.com).

## Shorter Meals on Wheels waiting list, new contact numbers aid seniors

An increase in funding for the Gwinnett County Meals on Wheels program will dramatically decrease the time seniors spend on the waiting list. *"In January we had 84 seniors on the waiting list and now we only have 15,"* said **Linda Bailey**, senior services manager.

The senior population in Gwinnett is increasing at a greater rate than the county's general growth, and the Meals on Wheels program is preparing for this increase by boosting the efficiency in the meal service process by strengthening the volunteer bank and working with the Friends of Gwinnett County Senior Services (FOGCSS) to raise funds for the program. Improvement can already be seen with the decreasing waiting list.

The program is designed to support caregivers and to help prolong senior independence with healthy eating. Gwinnett seniors 60 years and older can participate and will receive frozen, chilled, or hot meals Monday through Friday.

Visit [www.gwinnettseniorservices.com](http://www.gwinnettseniorservices.com), the new Web address for Meals on Wheels and other senior services information, or use these new phone numbers for specific programs and contribution opportunities:

Information Helpline	678.377.4150
Homemaking Services	678.377.4150
Meals on Wheels	678.377.4150
Buford Senior Center	770.614.2527
Lawrenceville Center	770.822.5180
Norcross Senior Center	770.638.5683
Senior Employment	770.822.5180
Transportation	678.377.4150
To make a donation	770.822.8775
To volunteer	770.822.8837

## "Citizen of the Year"

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...serving his third consecutive term as chairman of the Board of Commissioners, has placed Gwinnett County on the pathway to success.

Hill has held leadership roles with the Gwinnett Rotary Club, Boys and Girls Club of Gwinnett, and the Gwinnett Unit of the American Cancer Society. He has also served as chairman of the Atlanta Regional Commission and is president of the National Association of Regional Councils Board.

*"I'm proud of our county, and I hope it will continue to be great,"* said **Hill** after being named top citizen.



# Important news for Gwinnett County taxpayers

### Homestead Exemption

Gwinnett County property owners should apply for homestead and value offset exemptions with the Office of the Tax Commissioner by May 1, 2004. There is no charge for this service.

For additional information regarding available exemptions, please contact the Department of Property Tax at 770.822.8800 or visit [www.gwinnett-tax.com](http://www.gwinnett-tax.com).

### Motor vehicle insurance status online

You can now check your motor vehicle in-

surance status online through the Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety (DMVS). You will need the vehicle identification number (VIN) and the current Georgia title number. These numbers are located on your current Georgia registration receipt. Visit [www.dmv.ga.gov](http://www.dmv.ga.gov) and click on "What's New - Insurance" and "Insurance Status Inquiry." If you have a question about your insurance status, please contact your insurance company's customer service center.

### Lapse of motor vehicle insurance coverage fines and penalties

Insurance companies now electronically

transmit motor vehicle insurance coverage directly to a database called the Georgia Electronic Insurance Compliance System (GEICS) maintained by the Georgia DMVS. If a vehicle has a lapse in insurance coverage for a period greater than 24 hours, the DMVS will mail the registered owner a "lapse in coverage" letter and assess a lapse fee of \$25 that must be paid within 30 days or the vehicle's registration and tag will be suspended until it is paid and further penalties will apply. For more information on GEICS, please visit [www.gwinnett-tag.com](http://www.gwinnett-tag.com) or [www.dmv.ga.gov](http://www.dmv.ga.gov).

## Teen Dream Walk a huge success

More than 550 teens participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Teen Dream Walk on January 19, 2004. The event kicked off with a pep talk from Saturday Night Live's Kenan Thompson, then walkers paraded to Shiloh High School for the unity celebration.

"The crowd packed this place," said **Michelle Carew-Bessette**, Centerville Community Center coordinator. There were performances by rapper Pierre "Eion" McNear

and the Perla Flamenca Dance Company, the Ayoluwa African Dance Theatre, the Northeast Atlanta Ballet Ensemble, the G-Steppers, and several local bands.

Teen Dream Walk is a unity walk and celebration commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Gwinnett Organized Teens-Hope of Tomorrow (GOT-HOT) and Gwinnett County's Health and Human Services Division sponsored the event.

### Check it out!

To get in the St. Patrick's Day spirit, browse the library's wonderful collection of Irish-themed fiction, Gaelic music, and colorful nonfiction from the Emerald Isle.

*The Princes of Ireland*, by Edward Rutherford

*The Young Wan*, by Brendan O'Carroll

*The Danny Boy Album*, CD recording

*On this Rockne*, by Ralph McInerney

*Irish Girls About Town*, Collection of short stories

*The Irish Roots of Margaret Mitchell's Gone with the Wind*, by David O'Connell

*Irish America: Coming Into Clover - The Evolution of a People and a Culture*, by Maureen Dezell

*Ireland: World Odysseys 2002*, Video

*Down the old plank road: the Nashville sessions*, CD recording by The Chieftains

This list is provided by the Gwinnett County Public Library. Call or visit one of our branches for additional selection assistance, or check our Web site at [www.gwinnettpl.org](http://www.gwinnettpl.org).

## Pet Corner



Pet Corner

"We just adopted our second dog from the shelter and couldn't be happier," said Scott and Patti Keefer. They adopted older dog Abby two years ago and say she is getting used to having a new puppy in "her" house.

There are other wonderful pets that need a loving home. If you would like to see photos of cats and dogs currently up for adoption, go to [www.gwinnettanimalcontrol.com](http://www.gwinnettanimalcontrol.com). You can also visit the shelter at Hi-Hope Road and Hwy. 316 in Lawrenceville or call them at 770.339.3200.





# WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND GWINNETT

Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation is sponsoring **free art exhibits**. The Pinckneyville Community Center is hosting the events at several locations around Gwinnett County. For more information, call 770.417.2200.

Art by **Latrecia Rafferty** will be displayed at the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse through May 21.

In honor of Black History Month, artwork by **Tunde Afolayan, Sammy Nicely, and Vernon Robinson, Jr.** will be displayed at Pinckneyville through April 7.

Art by **Southern Colours Art Association** will be displayed at the Centerville Community Center through March 12.

**Start with Art:** bring your lunch at noon to the Pinckneyville Community Center on March 1 for a free writing/writer's tool kit demonstration or to the Centerville Community Center on March 2 for a free demonstration on writing your spiritual autobiography. You will also learn more about classes and programs at the centers. Call 770.417.2200.

Dress up as your favorite country music star, polish up the tractor, and mosey on down to the **Honky Tonk Hoedown Dad and Daughter Dance** at Bogan Park Community Center on March 5 at 6:30pm. Dads and daughters will enjoy line dance instruction, a hot dog dinner, and more! The cost is \$15 per couple and \$3 for each additional child. Call 770.614.2060.

**Spend a weekend on the wild side at Cumberland Island March 5 – 7.** Campers will see a variety of unique species such as alligators, armadillos, snakes, heron, and the famous island horses. The cost is \$60 per person and pre-registration is required. Call 770.932.4460.

Show off your skating skills at **Skate Fest** on March 6 from 9:00am – 4:00pm at Pinckneyville Park. This will be an exciting day of skating demonstrations and competition for

teens. To enter the competition, call 770.417.2200.

**Water exercise classes** are available from 10:00am – noon at Bogan Aquatic Center, Collins Hill Aquatic Center, and the new Mountain Park Aquatic Center. Register in person at the location where you would like to take the class on March 6. The session runs from March 16 – May 13. Call 770.822.8881.

Dress up in your best clown costume and join us with Doodles the Clown for an evening of magic, face painting, balloon art, and just plain clowning around. The **Clown Party** is March 12 from 7:00pm – 9:00pm at Rhodes Jordan Park Community Center. Participants will enjoy refreshments and receive a complimentary photo. Cost is \$7 per person. Call 770.822.5414.

Come see what Gwinnett has to offer senior citizens at the **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Senior Day Out**. There will be informative programs, booths, entertainment, arts, crafts, and special presentations March 12 from 9:00am – 1:00pm at Gwinnett University Center. Complimentary lunch will be served. Call 678.407.5061 or 678.407.5016.

Head to Lucky Shoals Park in Norcross for the first ever **Family Kickball Classic** on March 20 from 10:00am – 12:30pm. Each team should consist of six family members (cousins, grandparents, close friends all count). Families will compete for the honor of being the Family Kickball Classic Champions! The cost is \$15 per family and team check-in is at 9:30am at the concession stand. Call 770.417.2200.

**Swimming lessons** sponsored by Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation will be taught at Bogan Aquatic Center, Collins Hill Aquatic Center, and the new Mountain Park Aquatic Center. Sign up at the pool where you plan to take lessons on March 27 from 10:00am – noon. The cost is \$50 per session and the session runs from April 12 – May 6. Call Bogan at 770.614.2063, Collins Hill at 770.237.5647, or Mountain Park at 770.564.4650.

Sign up now for the **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Gwinnett Senior Golden Olympics**. The games will take place April 24 – May 22 and include archery, basketball throw, billiards, bocce ball, bowling, golf, holey board, horseshoes, golf putting, walking, race walking, running, cycling, shuffleboard, swimming, tennis, table tennis, darts, and field games. The Gwinnett Golden Olympics provide adults 50 years and older with an opportunity to participate in a variety of sports competitions, meet new people, learn new leisure skills, and learn more about the recreational activities available to them. Registration deadline is March 19. Call 770.564.4680 or visit [www.gwinnettseniorolympics.org](http://www.gwinnettseniorolympics.org).

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is offering to help **complete federal and Georgia state income tax returns at no cost** on Tuesdays and Thursdays until April 15 from 9:00am to 1:00pm at the Norcross Human Services Center. Services will be provided on a first-come basis and priority will be given to senior citizens. Bring your W-2 forms, 1099 forms, and supporting documentation. For more information, call 770.638.5660 and for directions visit [www.gwinnettnhsc.com](http://www.gwinnettnhsc.com).

## countyline

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