



county Line

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Katrina evacuees find help, support in Gwinnett County

With hundreds, maybe thousands, of homeless survivors of Hurricane Katrina now in Gwinnett County, the Board of Commissioners voted on September 6 to "take any and all actions necessary and feasible to assist the victims." The Board noted that emergency circumstances exist requiring extraordinary and immediate action for the protection and safety of the evacuees.

A former Wal-Mart store in Lawrenceville was set up to house staff from government and social service agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the American Red Cross, to help Katrina evacuees get on the road to recovery. Georgia's Department of

Driver Services representatives were at the center to resolve driver's license questions and the Department of Family and Children Services fielded questions about food stamps and family support. Other state agencies helped evacuees with housing, education, mental health, and employment issues. Gwinnett County purchased the building in August with plans to use it for records storage, a public health clinic, and environmental health offices.

"There is a tremendous need right here in our area for many different agencies to people who are starting over with nothing after the storm," **Commission Chairman Charles Bannister** said. "We happened to have a large, empty

building that we can make available temporarily and the Board agreed to postpone meeting our own needs in order to help these people."

Gwinnett County also hosted a job fair on September 9 at the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center in Lawrenceville. There were 42 prospective employers at the fair, including Coca-Cola, UPS, Marriott Gwinnett Place, Wal-Mart Distribution Center, Gwinnett Medical Center, Lake Lanier Islands, and various temporary agencies in addition to the county government and Gwinnett public schools. More than 2,000

... continued on page 2

contents

Advice from Tax Commissioner



CPR Training



Hispanic Heritage Month



Surplus Auction



Pet Corner



Check it out!



Around Gwinnett



Department of Public Utilities Open House celebrates Clean Water Week

Join the Gwinnett County Department of Public Utilities in an open house celebration for the 33rd anniversary of the Clean Water Act at the Yellow River/Sweetwater Creek Water Reclamation Facility on Saturday, October 15.

The celebration will feature facility tours, arts and crafts, hayrides, lunch, and fun for the whole family from 10:00am to 2:00pm.

The Yellow River/Sweetwater Creek Water Reclamation Facility is located on Tom Smith Road in Lilburn. For more information, contact Michael O'Shield at 678.376.7157.



The open house celebration will feature facility tours, hayrides, arts and crafts, lunch, and fun for the whole family on October 15 at the Yellow River/Sweetwater Creek Water Reclamation Facility.



Advice from the Tax Commissioner: New information about homestead exemptions

Georgia law recently changed the homestead exemption application filing period for property owners. The law provides for different filing periods for 2006 and afterwards.

Property owners filing homestead applications for 2006 need to apply from June 1, 2005 through March 1, 2006. For 2007 exemptions, property owners will need to file exemptions from January 2, 2006, through March 1, 2007. For exemptions after 2007, application filing periods will begin at the start of each calendar year preceding the year for which exemptions are applied.

Gwinnett County offers special homestead exemptions to eligible property owners, disabled persons, and senior citizens. Special exemptions are based on age, disability, and/or income. Since many of the special exemptions have income limitations, a copy of the individual's federal and state income tax returns for 2004 should accompany the application for a special exemption.

Property owners already receiving an exemption and who had no ownership changes to their deed do not need to reapply. They will

continue to receive current exemption from property taxes. If a property owner refinances his or her home, that individual does not have to reapply for a homestead exemption. However, if the owner is correcting the spelling, deleting, or adding a person's name to the warranty deed on a home, he or she must reapply.

Gwinnett County homeowners interested in homestead exemption should contact the Gwinnett County Office of the Tax Commissioner directly for information and applications. The Tax Commissioner's Office is located in the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center in Lawrenceville. Office hours are from 8:30am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday and office personnel are available to assist property owners in determining the type of exemption most appropriate in each situation. For 24-hour service, customers are encouraged to call TaxTalk24, 770.822.8800, or visit www.gwinnett-tax.com.

The Gwinnett County Tax Commissioner also collects property taxes for Berkeley Lake, Dacula, Grayson, Lawrenceville, Lilburn, Snellville, and Sugar Hill. Property owners residing in these cities who apply for a county exemption may also receive applicable city exemptions.

2005 Property Tax Payment Deadlines

The first installment for 2005 property tax bills is due on October 15. The second installment is due November 15.

Installments not paid by the stated due dates will have a five percent penalty added to the installment amount. In addition, interest will begin to accrue at the rate of one percent per month beginning on November 16.

For assistance, taxpayers should call the Tax Commissioner's 24-hour customer service line at 770.822.8800, or e-mail the Property Tax Department at propertytax@gwinnettcountry.com.

CPR Saturday

Take advantage of free CPR classes offered by the Gwinnett County Department of Fire and Emergency Services:

October 15
8:30am – 4:30pm
Gwinnett Justice and
Administration Center

To register for a free class, call the Programs and Services Section at 678.518.4850.

Hurricane Katrina

... cont'd from page 1

people took advantage of the opportunity to look for employment in Gwinnett County and nearly half of those in attendance were evacuees from Hurricane Katrina.

Even before the vote on September 6, County administration had asked departments and employees to cut down on unnecessary fuel usage in both personal and county vehicles and equipment and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services volunteered the use of three medical units to help transport patients coming from the Gulf Coast from the Dobbins Air Force Base in Marietta to area hospitals, including hospitals in Gwinnett County.



A former Wal-Mart store in Lawrenceville was set up to house the American Red Cross Resource Recovery Center.



Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month in Gwinnett

October is Hispanic Heritage Month and Gwinnett County is celebrating all month long! Throughout the month, there will be many opportunities to explore and learn about the Hispanic culture, including an essay contest for school children.

There will be a celebration with prizes, exhibits, gifts, native foods, crafts, and folkloric dances at the Wal-Mart at the intersection of Sugarloaf Parkway and Lawrenceville Highway on Saturday, October 15 from noon to 5:00pm. The winners of the essay contest for will be announced at the celebration.

The first floor of the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center will house colorful displays of pottery, basket weavings, paintings, clothing, and music from Latin America. Information on Latin American countries, Hispanic media outlets, pictures, and biographies of Latino success stories in the community will also be part of the exhibit. The self-guided exhibit will be on display during the month of October.

For more information about Hispanic Heritage Month festivities, call 770.638.5668.

County to auction surplus items on October 15

The 2005 Gwinnett County surplus auction will be held on Saturday, October 15 at the Fleet Management facility in Lawrenceville, located at 620 Swanson Drive.

Vehicles, office furniture, and miscellaneous items will be sold at the auction. There will be a public viewing of items to be sold on Friday, October 14 from 8:00am – 3:00pm. On auction day, viewing begins at 8:00am and the bidding will begin at 10:00am.

Wayne Evans Auction Company will conduct all sales and county employees will not receive any preferential treatment. Payment for purchase must be made by cash, cashier's check, or a check accompanied by a bank guarantee.

For more information, contact Wayne Evans Auction Company at 1.800.282.8460 or visit the company's website, www.weaci.com.

Check it out!

As the weather cools it's nice to spend more time outdoors. Make the most of your outings by consulting the following guides. There is something for everyone to do in Georgia!

Fun with the family in Georgia: Hundreds of Ideas for Day Trips with the Kids, by Carol Thalimer

Georgia Curiosities: Quirky Characters, Roadside Oddities and Other Offbeat Stuff, by William Schemmel

Quick Escapes Atlanta 2005, by Carol Thalimer

The Best in Tent Camping: Georgia, by Johnny Molloy

Georgia: Off the Beaten Path, by William Schemmel

Camping Georgia, by Alex Nutt

Georgia Nature Weekends: 52 Adventures in Nature, by Terry Johnson

Birding Georgia, by Giff Neaton

Hiking Georgia (e-book), by Donald Pfitzer

The Riverkeeper's Guide to the Chattahoochee, by Fred Brown

This list is provided by the Gwinnett County Public Library. Call or visit your local branch for additional selection assistance, or check out the GCPL website at www.gwinnettpl.org.

Meet the Author!

Amy Blackmarr
October 18 at 7:00pm
Collins Hill Branch

Brandon Massey
October 25 at 7:00pm
Lilburn Branch

Pet Corner



Pet Corner



You can find lots of adorable cats, dogs, puppies, and kittens at the Gwinnett County Animal Shelter at Highway 316 and Hi-Hope Road in Lawrenceville. Adoption counselors are available to help you find the perfect pet to fit your lifestyle.

If you would like to see photos of cats and dogs currently up for adoption, check out www.gwinnettanimalcontrol.com. You can also visit the shelter or call 770.339.3200.

Sasha, a four-year old gray and white tabby who was rescued by Shannon Coffey in Communications, mauls her stuffed toy frog.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND GWINNETT

Learn about Senior Clubs in Gwinnett at the **Fun Day Picnic** on October 7 at 11:30am at the Gwinnett Senior Center in Lawrenceville. Bring a dish to share and enjoy the free hamburgers and hotdogs. For more information, call 770.564.4680.

Celebrate at the **3rd Annual Lenora Harvest Festival and Craft Expo** on October 8 from 10:00am – 4:00pm at Lenora Park in Snellville. You will enjoy for crafts, moonwalk, pony rides, and plenty of good food! Reservations and a \$15 fee is required for crafters. Call 770.822.5414 to reserve a space or for more information.

Bluegrass and folk singer/songwriter Kevin Danzing will perform at the Gwinnett History Museum in Lawrenceville on October 14 for **Grounds 'n' Sounds**. Doors open at 8:00pm and the music starts at 8:30pm. Admission is \$5 and Starbucks Coffee, drinks, and light desserts will be available for purchase. Call 770.822.5178 for more information or to receive a copy of *Java Jottings*.

Enjoy a day of old-fashioned festivities, hayrides, games, animal exhibits, music, food, and fun at **Farm Fest** at McDaniel Farm Park in Duluth on October 15. Demonstrations will begin at 10:00am and include blacksmithing, mule plowing, antique tractors, quilting, and more! Admission is \$2 per person (free admission for children 3 and under). For more information, call 770.814.4920.

Join in the Park-nership! The Gwinnett Parks Foundation is looking for volunteers to help with beautification projects at two parks: Ronald Reagan Park in Lawrenceville Vines Garden in Loganville on October 15 from 9:00am – noon. Tools and equipment are needed and donations are accepted. For additional information, call 770.822.8813 or visit www.gwinnettparksfoundation.org.

Registration for **winter basketball and winter cheerleading** (ages 4 – 14) will be held on October 17 – 18 from 6:00pm – 8:00pm at Lucky Shoals Park in Norcross. The cost is \$40 per person and all games will be played in the gym at Best Friend Park. Coaches and team moms are also needed. For more information, call 770.564.3060.

Want to meet seniors from all over Georgia? **Camp Will-A-Way** in Winder is the place

to be October 17 – 20! Enjoy a dance, costume party, road trip to Ellijay for Georgia Mountain apples, games, food, competitions, and more! Call 770.564.4680.

Seniors, take a **mystery trip** with the Gwinnett Senior Center on October 19. For more information, call 770.564.4680.

Registration for **adult winter softball** will be held at Rhodes Jordan Park Community Center in Lawrenceville on October 20 at 7:00pm. Registration is by team only and the cost is \$340 per team. Each team will play a 10-game season and games will be played at Bethesda Park and George Pierce Park. Divisions include men's open, women's open, coed, men's industrial, and men's church. For more information, call 770.822.5152.

Dance the night away at the **Carnival Costume Party** on October 21 from 7:00pm – 10:00pm at Pinckneyville Community Center in Norcross. Enjoy games, prizes, and more! Pre-registration is preferred and the cost is \$10 for a family of four and \$2 for each additional person. Call 770.417.2200.

Don't miss the **Senior Idol 2005** finals at the Gwinnett Senior Center in Lawrenceville on October 21! Cheer for your favorites and enjoy the entertainment! Preliminary contests will be held through October 7 at various Gwinnett locations and competition is open to seniors aged 50 and older. For more information, call 770.564.4680.

Border Collies and Celtic and Scots-Irish musicians will perform at the Gwinnett History Museum in Lawrenceville on October 28 for **Coffee Ceilidh (pronounced "kay-lee")**. The doors open at 8:00pm and the music starts at 8:30pm. Admission is \$5 and Starbucks coffee, drinks, and light desserts will be available for purchase. Call 770.822.5178 for more information.

Don't miss the **Gwinnett Senior Health Fair** on October 28 at the Gwinnett Senior Center in Lawrenceville. Take advantage of health screenings, demonstrations, fun activities, educational information, door prizes, goodie bags, and refreshments from 9:00am – noon. The following screenings and activities require an appointment: flu vaccine, hearing screen, lipid profile, and mammogram. There is a fee for some screenings. Call 678.442.5000.

Bring your blankets, chairs, and picnic dinners for a free concert on the lawn of the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse in Lawrenceville on October 28 at 8:00pm. Call 770.822.5450 for more information about the **Moonlight and Music Concert Series** or to reserve a table for six (\$40 per table).

Don't miss the spooky **Mother/Son Halloween Dance** at Dacula Activity Building on October 28 from 6:00pm – 9:00pm. Dancing, games, prizes, snacks, and a commemorative keepsake photo are all part of this fun event. Costumes are required to enter the dance. Pre-registration is required and the cost is \$15. Call 770.822.5414 for more information.

Don't miss the **8th Annual Hairy Halloween Pet Costume Contest** on October 29 from 10:00am – noon at Pinckneyville Community Center in Norcross. Pre-registration is preferred. Judging begins at 11:00am. For more information, call 770.417.2200.

Decorate your stroller, tricycle, bike, unicycle, or anything else with wheels and join the **Halloween parade and costume contest** on October 29 from 3:00pm – 5:00pm at Rhodes Jordan Park. Call 770.822.5414.

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Editor
Heather R. Welch

Staff Writer
Kinsey Snell

Art Direction
Shannon E. Coffey

Layout and Design
Kinsey Snell

Gwinnett County
75 Langley Drive
Lawrenceville, GA 30045
770.822.7035
www.gwinnettcountry.com

Call editor **Heather Welch** at **770.822.7035** with your newsletter articles and suggestions or e-mail heather.welch@gwinnettcountry.com. Please remember that information may not be printed in its entirety due to space constraints. The County Line can be read online at www.gwinnettcountry.com