



county Line

a monthly publication of gwinnett county, georgia

august 2006 v14, n8



Fire and Emergency Services opens Station 26, breaks ground for stations 8, 27

Officials gathered on July 10 to celebrate the opening of Fire Station 26 in Sugar Hill. The facility includes of-
fice space, workout room, kitchen and dining area, bunkroom space, and various storage spaces. The station will be staffed by a crew of 12 (four per shift).

"The need for a new station to serve the rapidly growing Sugar Hill area had been projected for many years. Our two stations on Buford Highway aren't



Staff from Fire Station 26 cut a ceremonial ribbon to mark the opening of the new station in Sugar Hill.

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Check it out!



Around Gwinnett



Auction proceeds to benefit Gwinnett Senior Services

Don't miss the fourth annual auction to benefit Gwinnett County Senior Services, hosted by the Friends of Gwinnett County Senior Services. This year's theme is *An Evening in Emerald City*.

Delmar Gardens of Gwinnett will host the event on August 10 from 6:00pm – 8:30pm. The auction is open to the public and all proceeds will be used to benefit the senior citizens in Gwinnett County.

"Friends" is a private, nonprofit organization run by volunteers, and receives all of its financial support through donations and fund raising events such as the silent auction.

"All funds raised from the auction will go directly to Gwinnett Senior Services and its programs," said **Celia Moore**, Gwinnett County's Health and Human Services Division's Resources and Marketing Coordinator. *"The senior services programs, such as Meals on Wheels and the senior emergency fund, are vital in helping seniors stay in the comfort and familiarity of their own homes."*

The Meals on Wheels program delivers frozen, chilled, or hot meals to homebound seniors Monday through Friday, with the exception of holidays. The program helps seniors to meet their daily nutritional needs and it

serves thousands of meals to clients each year.

The auction will feature items donated by local businesses and corporations, as well as music, cocktails, and heavy hors d'oeuvres. Some of the big-ticket items include airline tickets, golf packages, and weekend getaways.

New to this year's auction will be the appearance of **Kelly and Alpha**, disc jockeys from the B98.5 Morning Show, who will be on hand to help with the live auction.

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Advice from the Tax Commissioner: Vehicle insurance

Motor vehicles registered in Georgia must have continuous liability insurance coverage. The state requires insurance companies to electronically transmit insurance information to the Georgia Electronic Insurance Compliance System (GEICS). Tag offices use this system to verify insurance coverage before registering vehicles or renewing tags.

Normally, tag offices cannot accept an insurance card as proof of insurance unless your vehicle is self-insured or if it is under a fleet insurance policy. In those cases, GEICS is not required to electronically retain the insurance information. Self-insured and fleet policy coverage information (or cards) must be with you at all times in the vehicle. Be sure to keep insurance information (card) handy when driving outside of Georgia in case of an accident or a request by law enforcement.

You can check your vehicle insurance status online through the Georgia Department of Revenue's database. To do this, you need the vehicle identification number and the vehicle's Georgia title number. These numbers are located on your Georgia registration receipt. Visit the state's website, <http://motor.etax.dor.ga.gov>, and click on *Insurance Status Inquiry* under *Online Options*. If you have questions about your insurance status, contact your insurance company's cus-

tommer service center. For additional assistance, send an e-mail to tag@gwinnettcountry.com or call 770.822.8818.

2007 Property Tax Homestead Filing Period

Property owners may file for a 2007 homestead exemption through March 1, 2007. Homestead exemptions can offer tax savings to property owners who own and occupy a property as of January 1 of the tax year for which the exemption is filed.

2006 Property Tax Bills Mailing in August

Gwinnett County 2006 property tax bills will be mailed in August 2006 with two payment coupons and two reply envelopes for both installment payments. First installments are due by October 15, 2006. The second installment is due November 15, 2006. 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 more information about homestead exemptions or property tax bills, e-mail your questions to propertytax@gwinnettcountry.com or call 770.822.8800.

Auction for Senior Services

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"I had a wonderful time, the food was amazing, and there were so many great items to bid on," said **Kristen McMillan**, who attended last year's event. *"There were people of all ages and everyone was having fun while contributing to a meaningful cause."*

Delmar Gardens of Gwinnett, a senior retirement community, has been generous in offering the use of the facility and providing the food for the event. *"The auction is simply a lot of fun. It's a great feeling to have fun while helping others,"* said **Jennifer Thilo**, President of Friends and director of Delmar Gardens of Gwinnett. *"It is a wonderful event and it is an honor for us to help."*

Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door. Ticket price includes admission to the auction event, entertainment, food, beverages, a door prize ticket, and participation in the silent auction. *"The auction is fun to plan, it's fun to watch it grow each year, and it's exciting to see the same people from the year before bring friends with them the next year. It just gets bigger and better and all for a wonderful cause – to help the seniors,"* said Moore.

For more information or to purchase advance tickets, contact Celia Moore at 770.822.8775 or celia.moore@gwinnettcountry.com.



Flu pandemic preparations: Why is the flu virus a threat?

by David Knope, Staff Writer

Last month's newsletter carried a story about how Gwinnett County is preparing for the possibility of a widespread health crisis, such as an influenza pandemic. This follow-up story looks at the flu virus itself and why world health officials consider it a major threat.

Influenza is a respiratory infection caused by a virus. The many varieties, or strains, of flu virus make it very difficult to develop vaccines to prevent the spread of flu or anti-viral drugs to treat those who get infected.

A typical seasonal flu generally affects five to 20 percent of U.S. residents every year. It can be more serious than you might think. More than 200,000 Americans are hospitalized and 36,000 die from the flu annually. But most of us recover in a week or two. Because we have previously been exposed to the most common virus strains, we have built up some resistance, or immunity, to them. An annual flu

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Flu pandemic preparations

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shot can help boost our immunity to the specific strains researchers expect to circulate in a particular year.

As they circulate through the population, flu viruses can mutate into new strains. They can even become resistant to anti-viral drugs and can make vaccines less effective. Historically, mutations have produced two or three widespread pandemics each century and have caused tens of millions of deaths from flu complications. New strains of flu virus are often virulent, highly contagious, and deadly

because people have no prior resistance or immunity to them.

Even with modern science and technology, it can take many months to develop a vaccine for a specific strain of virus, and many more months to mass produce it. And we can't really predict when a mutation will occur or whether existing anti-viral drugs will be effective against it.

The possibility that the current Asian "bird flu" virus could cause a worldwide pandemic

has led officials to make plans to counter the threat. Individuals can prepare for a flu pandemic by keeping food, water, and emergency supplies on hand; washing hands frequently with an alcohol-based hand cleaner; avoiding close contact with sick people; and getting involved with community efforts to prepare for a crisis. For more information, check out www.pandemicflu.gov.



Curious about your family tree?

Try HeritageQuest Online™!

Researching your family history has never been easier! To find your ancestors, trace their paths across America, and learn about what life was like in the areas where they settled, search *HeritageQuest Online*.

HeritageQuest Online is a new resource for Gwinnett County Public Library cardholders. *HeritageQuest Online* combines digital, searchable images of U.S. federal census records with the digitized version of the popular *UMI® Genealogy & Local History* collection and other valuable content. This online data-

base is an essential collection of unique material for genealogy and history researchers, with coverage dating back to the late 1700s.

HeritageQuest Online is accessible from any branch of the Gwinnett County Public Library and will soon be accessible from your home computer and other remote locations.

All you need is a Gwinnett County Public Library card. No card? No problem. Customers can apply online and receive the card by mail or simply apply in person at one of the local branches.

Check it out!

Did you know the Gwinnett County Public Library offers access to online practice exams for a variety of academic and professional pursuits? The following is a partial list of the available practice exams:

AP Biology, Calculus, U.S. History, English Literature and Composition

Civil Service Careers: Federal, Clerical, Postal Worker

College Preparation: ACT, CUNY, SAT Practice Exams

Cosmetology

Basic EMT, Paramedic, Firefighter

GED Preparation

GMAT, GRE, LSAT, MCAT

Law Enforcement: Border Patrol, Corrections Officer, Police Officer, Police Sergeant, Treasury Enforcement Agent

Military – ASVAB Preparation

Real Estate: Broker, Sales Agent

Teacher Certification

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.

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.

To see pictures of cats and dogs currently up for adoption, visit www.gwinnettanimalcontrol.com. For more information, stop by the shelter, or call 770.339.3200.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND GWINNETT

Pack up a picnic and bring the family out to **Watermelon Family Fun Day** on August 5 from 11:00am – 2:00pm at Bogan Park in Buford. Games and watermelon will be provided for the whole family. The cost is \$5 for a family of four and \$2 for each additional person. Call 770.614.2060 for more information. All ages are welcome.

Kids ages two and three will enjoy **Kids Craft Hour** on August 9 from 10:00am – 11:00am at Bogan Park. The cost is \$5 per person, and pre-registration is required by August 4. Call 770.614.2060.

Enjoy live music at **Grounds 'N' Sounds** on August 11 at the Gwinnett History Museum inside the Lawrenceville Female Seminary. The Skillet Lickers will perform as part of the Coffeehouse Nights beginning at 8:30pm. Doors open at 8:00pm. Starbucks coffee, drinks, and light desserts will be available for purchase, and admission is \$5. For more information or to receive the monthly newsletter, *Java Jottings*, call 770.822.5178.

Get out and enjoy the outdoors with a day hike in the North Georgia Mountains on August 12 from 8:30am – 4:30pm. On the **Herb Walk**, you will learn what plants can be used for medicine or food and which plants

are poisonous. The walk is semi-strenuous. The van will depart from Bogan Community Center at 8:30am. All ages are welcome. The cost is \$15/person. Call 770.614.2060.

Don't miss the **Lucky Shoals Fall Sports Celebration** on August 19 beginning at 10:00am. Fun family activities will include moonwalks, games, and free sports clinics for players and coaches. Food concessions will also be available for purchase. All ages welcome. Lucky Shoals Park is located in Norcross. For more information, call 770.564.3060 .

Make new friends, have fun playing games, and enjoy pizza and refreshments at **Pizza and Game Night for Seniors** on August 21 from 5:00pm – 7:00pm at the Gwinnett Senior Center at Bethesda Park. The cost is \$5 per person. Call 770.564.4680 to reserve a spot.

Enjoy music under the stars on the lawn of the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse in historic downtown Lawrenceville. The **Moonlight and Music Concert** on August 25 at 8:00pm will features tunes from the acoustic singer/songwriter Shawn Mullins. All ages are welcome. Concertgoers can bring a picnic or dine at one of the restaurants on the Square.

Visit www.visitlawrenceville.com for more information, or call 770.822.450.

Meet the instructors and see ballet, fencing, pottery, and painting class demonstrations at the **3rd Annual Expo** at Pinckneyville Community Center on August 26. Instructors' artwork will be on display, as well as entries from the **Awesome Artist Contest**. All ages are welcome. Call 770.417.2200.

The Pinckneyville Community Center sponsors an art exhibit at the following location:

The **Joy of Color** will be on display at the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse in downtown Lawrenceville through August 24.

Check out **Gwinnett LIFE** magazine online at www.gwinnettparks.com for a complete listing of classes and programs, or pick up a brochure at your neighborhood library, park community center, gym or aquatic center, the Gwinnett Senior Center at Bethesda Park, Gwinnett Convention and Visitors Bureau, or the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center. Online registration begins August 21. Call 770.822.8840 for additional information.

Fire and Emergency Services ————— ... continued from page 1

terribly far away, but when a fire or emergency strikes, every second counts," said Commission Chairman **Charles Bannister**. *"As this area continues to grow and develop, traffic naturally increases and there are more lives to protect. So this station is needed, and it's entering service at an excellent time."*

"As a resident of this county and long-time member of Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services, I've witnessed the tremendous growth in all areas of Gwinnett, especially over the past decade," said Fire Chief **Steve Rolader**. *"To keep up with the demand for services that a growing population brings, we're fortunate to have leaders with vision and concerned citizens who have supported that vision with their votes for the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax programs,*

the most recent in 2005. As a result, we've continued to add new fire stations across the county to provide excellent service to our community."

County officials and Fire and Emergency Services staff are looking forward to breaking ground on two new facilities on August 1.

Fire Station 27 will be a new station in Dacula, located off of Old Fountain Road. The Fire Station 8 facility will be a relocation. The new station will be built directly behind its existing location on Grayson Highway to make room for the GA 20 widening project. The ceremony will begin at 11:00am for Station 27 and at 3:30pm for Station 8; both will take place at their respective future sites.

countyline

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