



County Line

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County website continues to evolve, become more of a business tool

Gwinnett County launched a new website in February 2005 and additional site capabilities have been quietly added throughout the year.

According to Communication Director **Joe Sorenson**, what was once used solely as a message presentation tool is now a tool that citizens can use to conduct business online with Gwinnett County. Some of the features available on the site include:

- Property tax payment options
- GIS datasets
- Access to browser-based GIS information, including home value and parcel boundary information and aerial photography
- Access to development and building permits, including the ability to request and check the status of inspections
- Automated subscription options for County publications
- E-mail alerts to notify the registered user when new content is posted or content is changed on the website
- Live access to Channel 23 – TV Gwinnett; the station streams 24 hours a day, seven days a week on the site
- Video available on-demand, including Commission meetings
- Intranet for employee information and employee business tool access
- Site search engine
- Personalization features

Expect to see even more advancements on the site in 2006:

- Online registration for Parks and Recreation activities, including swim lessons, adult sports, etc.
- More building permit capabilities, including the ability to purchase some permits online via credit card
- Enhanced property tax payment options
- Navigation improvements
- Employee intranet improvements

www.gwinnettcounty.com

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Around Gwinnett



County sets up new stormwater utility in 2006

In an effort to find a fair, equitable way to fund stormwater activities, Gwinnett County is implementing a new utility in 2006. The stormwater utility will provide a funding source for replacing stormwater pipes, reducing flooding, fulfilling regulatory requirements, and reducing pollution carried by stormwater to waterways.

"Water quality and stormwater runoff have become expensive issues affecting public service, public health, and the environment. Federal and state regu-

lations of stormwater are becoming increasingly restrictive," said Commission Chairman **Charles Bannister**. *"To meet these challenges, we have to upgrade the stormwater program to become a full-fledged partner within the Public Utilities Department and increase the service level for the public."*

The County will charge stormwater service fees based on the square footage of impervious surface (rooftop, driveway, etc.) on each parcel of property. The Georgia Supreme Court

has said that the amount of impervious surface is the most important factor influencing the cost of stormwater management services. The fee will be billed in the summer of 2006, along with streetlights and other charges listed on the property tax bill. Each parcel with more than 100 square feet of impervious area will receive a bill in 2006. A home

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Local streams and rivers suffering from many “minor” pollution sources

by Steve Leo, Stormwater Management Division

Death by a thousand cuts was an ancient method of torture and execution where the unfortunate recipient was subjected to 1,000 small cuts all over his or her body. Each cut by itself was small enough that, while painful, could have been easily treated without any long-term consequences. However, when combined with an additional 999 similar wounds, the effect was deadly.

So, what does this horrible procedure have to do with our daily experiences in modern America? Gwinnett's streams and rivers face a similar death by a thousand cuts each day, and each one of us holds the knife.

Most water pollution is not caused by one or two menacing factories dumping toxic waste into a storm drain in the middle of the night. Instead, it is the small drips, drops, and spills of many pollutants onto the ground that contribute most to water pollution. These small pollution sources, while insignificant on their own, are washed together

into local streams during rain events where they combine to create a significant pollution problem.

You would hardly affect your local stream if you were the only one in your area washing your car in the driveway, poisoning weeds in the gutter, spilling fertilizer into the street, or not picking up after your pet. But you are not alone. There are thousands of others out there just like you doing the same things and our waterways end up suffering a proverbial death by a thousand cuts as a result.

Storm drains are designed to stop flooding by quickly moving rainwater from roads, parking lots, and other areas into streams. County ordinances prohibit the use of storm drains for disposal of anything other than rainwater and provide penalties for violation. If you know of or see individuals involved in dumping or discharging wastes into storm drains or onto the ground, please report it to the Stormwater Management Division by calling 678.376.7000.

Together, we can all take actions to heal the cuts we've made and bring our streams back to good health.

Advice from the Tax Commissioner

Did you know that several of the services offered by the Tax Commissioner's Office are available over the telephone? Last month's column explained how to renew your tag over the phone, but you can also handle your property taxes over the phone!

System Features

- Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- English and Spanish language options
- Live agents are available during regular business hours

System Services

- Obtain property map reference numbers or a property address
- Get information on tax exemptions and delinquent taxes
- Make property tax payments on a specific parcel by check
- Request property tax forms by fax
- Request duplicate tax bills
- Update your mailing address

To take advantage of these over-the-phone services, call 770.822.8800.

For more information, visit www.gwinnetttaxcommissioner.com or e-mail the Property Tax Office at propertytax@gwinnettcountry.com.



Bring one for the Chipper

Do you need help getting rid of your Christmas tree?

Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful and the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners is sponsoring "Bring one for the Chipper" through January 8, 2006. Bring your old Christmas tree, stripped of its decorations, to one of the drop-off sites around the county:

- **Buford** – Fire Station 14
- **Dacula** – Fire Station 17 and Fire Station 18
- **Duluth** – Fire Station 5 and Fire Station 19
- **Grayson** – Fire Station 8
- **Lawrenceville** – Fire Station 9, Fire Station 15, Fire Station 20, and Fire Station 25
- **Lilburn** – Fire Station 2, Fire Station 3, and Fire Station 22
- **Norcross** – Fire Station 11 and Fire Station 23
- **Snellville** – Fire Station 6 and Briscoe Park Soccer Parking Lot
- **Suwanee** – Fire Station 21 and Town Center Park

Recycling your Christmas tree makes for an easy disposal solution. You will also be saving landfill space, helping to reduce soil erosion, and contributing to a mulch supply that will make Gwinnett's parks and schoolyards more beautiful! Call Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful at 770.822.5187 for additional information.

CPR Classes

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

February 10 and February 11
8:30am – 4:30pm
Fire Headquarters

Call the Programs and Services Section at 678.518.4850 to register

Gwinnett Senior Golden Olympics: Sign up now

Sign up now for the 2006 Gwinnett Senior Golden Olympic Games, which will be held April 21 – May 19. Competitive events include archery, basketball throw, billiards, bocce ball, bowling, golf, holey board, horseshoes, golf putting, cycling, shuffleboard, swimming, table tennis, darts, tennis, walking, and field games. Competition is open to adults age 50 and older. The registration fee is \$10 per person until March 17; late registration is \$15. Pick up a registration form at the Gwinnett Senior Center in Lawrenceville, or call 770.564.4680.

Stormwater utility

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with 3,517 square feet of impervious surface would pay \$27.08 the first year; \$49.59 in 2007; \$70.69 in 2008; and \$86.52 for each year 2009 through 2011. Two-thirds of the homes in Gwinnett County have less than 3,517 square feet.

According to Public Utilities Director **Frank Stephens**, the department will organize a work group representing citizens, businesses, developers, cities, and environmental groups to develop a credits manual. Credits would partially offset the service fee for parcels that contain eligible best management practices. "A BMP measurably reduces the burden on the public stormwater drainage system," said Stephens. The plan would implement a retroactive credits program in 2007.

The stormwater system has a huge backlog of needed repairs due to the deterioration and failure of hundreds of miles of galvanized steel pipe that was installed prior to Gwinnett County's ban on the use of the material in 2001. Additionally, the state requires watershed protection for both newer and older developments, enforced through expensive conditions on discharge permits for reclaimed water. The new utility could generate up to \$34 million annually to fix these problems.

Check it out!

No matter what your resolution is for 2006, you can find help sticking to it at the Gwinnett County Public Library. The "...for Dummies" series offers tips and advice on just about everything. Below is a partial list of the books available at the GCPL.

Fundraising for Dummies, by John Mutz

Investing Online for Dummies, by Kathleen Sindell

Yoga for Dummies, by George Feuerstein

Home-Based Businesses for Dummies, by Parl Edwards, Sarah Edwards, and Peter Economy

Baby Names for Dummies, by Margaret Rose

Guitar for Dummies, by Mark Phillips

Time-Share Vacations for Dummies, by Lisa Ann Schreier

Dog Training for Dummies, by Jack and Wendy Volhard

Trouble-Shooting Your PC for Dummies, by Dan Gookin

Genealogy Online for Dummies, by Matthew Helm

Horses for Dummies, by Audrey Pavia and Janice Posnikoff

Chess for Dummies, by James Eade

Card Games for Dummies, by Barry Rigal

Quilting for Dummies, by Cheryl Fall

Law for Dummies, by John Ventura

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



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.

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





WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND GWINNETT

Join the **Shorty Howell Hi-Steppers**, a new senior club that meets the first Thursday of each month. Bring a covered dish to share to Shorty Howell Activity Building in Duluth on January 5 at 11:30am. Call 770.814.4914.

Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation is offering hundreds of **recreational classes for adults and children** this winter; registration for classes begins January 9. If you are a resident of Gwinnett County and would like to receive a copy of *Gwinnett L.I.F.E.* in the mail, go to www.gwinnetttlife.org and enter your name and mailing address. *Gwinnett L.I.F.E.* is also available at www.gwinnettparks.com, or can be picked up at any Gwinnett County park, the Gwinnett County Public Library, or participating high schools. Call 770.822.8840.

Swim lesson registration for Gwinnett residents will be held on January 9. Classes are held on Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays for four weeks and last 30 minutes; class is taught at Bogan, Collins Hill, and Mountain Park Aquatic Centers. Class times vary throughout the day. Individuals may not be registered for more than one class at a time. Non-residents can register beginning January 12. Sessions run from January 23 – February 16; February 27 – March 23; and April 10 – May 4. For more information, call Bogan Aquatic Center, 770.614.2063; Collins Hill Aquatic Center, 770.237.5647, or Mountain Park Aquatic Center, 770.564.4650. For details, visit www.gwinnettparks.com.

Water aerobics registration for Gwinnett residents will be held on January 9. Non-residents can register beginning on January 12. Session one runs from January 9 – March 2; session two: March 13 – May 11. Call Bogan Aquatic Center at 770.614.2063, Collins Hill Aquatic Center at 770.237.5647, or Mountain Park Aquatic Center at 770.564.4650 for more information. Visit www.gwinnettparks.com for complete details.

Registration for the winter quarter of **SeniorNet** computer classes will be held January 10 from 9:30am – 1:00pm at the Gwinnett Senior Center in Lawrenceville. Registration is open to adults age 50 and older. Current SeniorNet members will be allowed to reg-

ister first and no sign-up will be allowed before January 10; call for a list of openings after that date. SeniorNet membership is required for all classes and is available at registration. A complete schedule of classes is available at the Gwinnett Senior Center and your local branch of the Gwinnett County Public Library. Visit www.seniornet.org/usa/gwinnett or call 770.564.4699 for more information.

Enjoy live music by Eric Larkins at **Coffee-house Nights** on January 13 at 8:00pm at the Lawrenceville Female Seminary. Admission is \$5, and Starbucks Coffee, drinks, and desserts will be available for purchase. Doors open at 8:00pm, and music starts at 8:30pm. Call 770.822.5178 for a copy of *Java Jottings*, a monthly newsletter devoted to the coffee-house nights.

Spring baseball and softball registration will be held on January 14 from 9:00am – 1:00pm at various locations. For more detailed information, visit www.gwinnettparks.com.

Don't miss **Teen Dream Walk**, a unity walk and musical celebration, on January 16 from 10:00am – 12:30pm at Shiloh High School. Call 678.437.8647 for more information.

Seniors, don't miss **Pizza and Game Night** on January 16 from 5:00pm – 7:00pm. Activities will include games, pizza, and refreshments at the Gwinnett Senior Center in Lawrenceville. The cost is \$5 per person. To make reservation, call 770.564.4680.

Grab your swimsuits, towels, and a picnic blanket for an afternoon of swimming, picnicking, games, crafts, and music at the **Winter Wipe-Out** on January 21 from 1:00pm – 5:00pm at the Mountain Park Activity Building. Reservations are required by January 16. The cost is \$20 for a family of four, and \$3 for each additional person. Call 770.564.3060.

Enjoy Scots-Irish music performed by local musician Katherine Irwin Thomas at **Coffee-Ceilidh** (pronounced "kay-lee") on January 27 at 8:00pm. Admission is \$5, and Starbucks Coffee, drinks, and desserts will be available for purchase. Doors open at 8:00pm, and the music will begin at 8:30pm. Call 770.822.5178.

Spend a Weekend on the Wild Side! Don't miss the **Cumberland Island Backpacking Trip** January 27 – 29. You will see alligators, armadillos, snakes, heron, and the famous island horses on this backpacking trip. Each person is responsible for his or her own transportation to St. Mary's Dock, equipment, and food. The cost is \$60 per person, which includes camping, boating, and parking fees. For more information, call 770.822.5404

Registration for the spring season of **special needs baseball** will be held on January 28 and February 11. Registration location is still to be determined. Games will be played at Bay Creek Park in Grayson. For detailed information about registration, call Michael Kohler at 678.377.9629.

It's time to make reservations for the annual **Valentine Dinner** at the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse. Dinner will be held on February 10 and 11, and both nights include dinner, music, a photo opportunity, and giveaways. Paid reservation must be received by February 3. Call 770.822.5450.

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