



county Line

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Clean water under pressure

Gwinnett County's waterways are under pressure from pollution.

With spring just around the corner, we all want to have a sparkling clean driveway, parking lot, or building exterior, but unfortunately the creeks and streams in Gwinnett County may end up paying the price. It often does not occur to us that a newly cleaned parking lot or driveway may mean that a nearby stream has just been polluted.

Oftentimes wash water generated during pressure washing and other outdoor cleaning is allowed to discharge into storm drains, which are directly connected to the creeks and

streams in our community. This wash water usually contains oil, grease, and other chemicals that cause water pollution.

In an effort to address this problem, County officials worked with members of the pressure washing industry to develop guidelines that detail how pressure washing wastewater should be managed to prevent water pollution. These guidelines generally require that wastewater be collected for proper disposal.

Working with the affected industry proved to be an important step in reducing water pollution caused by pressure washing; however, the con-

sumer also plays a vital role in this process. By only selecting pressure washing companies that comply with the guidelines, you are doing your part to become a solution to stormwater pollution. Be sure to visit www.gwinnettstormwater.com for a look at the list of contractors who have demonstrated their ability to collect and manage polluted wash water.



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Around Gwinnett



Thermal imaging cameras save lives

Insuramerica Corporation and Fireman's Fund Insurance Company awarded an \$11,400 grant to the Gwinnett County Department of Fire and Emergency Services for the purchase of a new thermal imaging camera.

The high-tech device enables firefighters to "see" through dense smoke and darkness to help rescue victims trapped in a building fire or airplane crash. The device is also used by fire crews to detect hidden fire inside a wall in order to complete extinguishment of hotspots.

"Thermal imaging cameras play a vital role in the saving of life and property during a fire," said Lieutenant **Thomas Rutledge**, spokesman for Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services. *"The addition of this new thermal imaging camera will increase the number of cameras available to firefighters at any given fire scene."*

Thermal imaging cameras offer state-of-the-art technology to firefighters. Gwinnett County Fire and Emergency Services Chief



Representatives from Insuramerica and Fireman's Fund present a check to Fire Chief Steve Rolader to purchase a new thermal imaging camera for the department.

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National County Government Day 2007

What: 7th Annual Open House

When: Saturday, April 28 from 11:00am – 2:00pm

Where: Rhodes Jordan Park Community Center
100 East Crogan Street
Lawrenceville, GA 30043

Expect to find great information from County departments plus free kids' activities such as pony rides and face painting! Free refreshments will be available while supplies last. Call 770.822.7180 for more information.



SeniorNet gets national award for GCPR

Seniors helping other seniors learn to use computers – that's what the County-sponsored SeniorNet Learning Centers are all about. Now the program is getting national recognition with the presentation of a 2007 Acts of Caring Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo).

"The program keeps seniors involved in their community and learning new skills that help keep them connected," according to Division Director **Sharon Plunkett** of Parks and Recreation Operations. *"SeniorNet adds a critical activity for the mind to the usual programming for seniors. Instead of just taking classes, seniors actually run the organization and its operations."*

In 1995, Parks and Recreation partnered with the community to open the Gwinnett SeniorNet Learning Center at Bethesda Park in the Gwinnett Senior Center. Last December, a satellite SeniorNet Learning Center opened in the Prime Timers Pointe senior activity center at the new George Pierce Park Community Center.

The program won top honors among large-county programs serving the elderly in the annual awards competition sponsored by NACo and Freddie Mac. Winners in six program categories were chosen from entries submitted by county governments all over America.

Learning Center volunteers over age 50 write course materials and teach other seniors to use computers and the Internet. Both sites are run by volunteers serving as board members, officers, instructors, coaches, equipment managers, course developers, and administrators.

Several of the 16 original founders of the group are still active. About 124 students in each eight-week term learn how to use Windows XP® and programs such as word processing, database, spreadsheets, Internet, e-mail, graphics, and digital photography. Short courses cover computer maintenance, scanning, and photo manipulation.

Nancy Nrse, president and learning center coordinator, said, *"Most classes have at least two volunteer coaches assisting the instructor. About 70 senior volunteers manage and run the organization, which also offers monthly PC Users Group meetings free to the public."*

The two Gwinnett centers are affiliated with the national SeniorNet organization that has more than 240 similar centers with 5,800 volunteers, 20,113 paid members, and more than 100,000 participants.

The Atlanta Regional Commission initially approached Gwinnett County and BellSouth about the idea. Soon IBM offered to provide most of the equipment for the center's first classroom. The Board of Commissioners approved an agreement between the County, SeniorNet, BellSouth, and IBM that governs the operation and responsibilities of each.

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Advice from the Tax Commissioner

Tag Renewals by Phone

In response to the ever-growing population in Gwinnett County, the Tax Commissioner provides motor vehicle-related information and services by telephone at 770.822.8818. Oftentimes, by making a phone call, you can alleviate the need to visit one of the Tax Commissioner's tag offices, saving you both time and fuel. The telephone system includes:

System Features

- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- English and Spanish language options
- Live agents available during regular business hours

System Services

- Tag renewals by telephone
- General information about the Tax Commissioner's Office (hours of operations, tag office locations, etc.)
- Motor vehicle registration information
- Duplicate tag renewal bills
- Motor vehicle forms by fax

In addition, the Tax Commissioner's Motor Vehicle Customer Service Center is available by e-mail at tag@gwinnettcountry.com, or visit the website at www.GwinnettTaxCommissioner.com.

Mobile Home Taxes

For those who own a mobile home, the mobile home tax payment deadline is May 1, 2007. For additional information on homestead exemptions or mobile home taxes, call the Tax Commissioner's 24-hour customer service line at 770.822.8800 or send an e-mail to tax@gwinnettcountry.com.



Senior Services: Volunteer opportunities abound

April 2007 is designated as **National Volunteer Month**. Now is the perfect time to become a volunteer who makes a difference in the life of an elderly person. Consider the value of helping a senior who would like to continue living in his or her own home, but is now challenged to handle even the simplest daily living chores and responsibilities. Seniors who receive daily Meals on Wheels service can no longer prepare meals, change a light bulb, or make simple home repairs that could affect their safety and well-being.

Gwinnett County Senior Services volunteers, including 46 county employees, contributed an estimated 30,100 hours of service in 2006. The added value of this heartfelt generosity was more than \$540,000, as calculated by The Independent Sector.

Meaningful individual or group service projects are readily available for corporations,

Thermal imaging

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Steve Rolader was joined by other firefighters, local dignitaries, and employees of Insuramerica and Fireman's Fund during a special grant presentation event held last December at Gwinnett Fire Headquarters.

organizations, and civic associations to assist seniors. This is the time to give your time, talent, and resources to help improve the quality of life for more than 700 senior clients. To learn about these volunteer opportunities, visit www.gwinnettseniorservices.com or call 770.822.8837.

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

— Anne Frank

SeniorNet

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Most of the original instructors were retired IBM employees, but over the years former students have gone on to teach and members have recruited new instructors. Thanks to sponsorships, the fees are reasonable for seniors at about \$5 – \$45 per class. Sponsors include Gwinnett County, IBM, BellSouth/AT&T, Microsoft, and the Promina Health System's Healthy Seniors program.

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Check it out!

The great outdoors beckons with the arrival of spring, even if just out to our backyard. Enjoy these new titles for help in your vegetable and flower gardens, as well as your lawn.

Down & Dirty: 43 Fun and Funky First-Time Projects and Activities to Get You Gardening, by Ellen Zachos

All New Square Foot Gardening, by Mel Bartholomew

Bird-by-Bird Gardening: The Ultimate Guide to Bringing in Your Favorite Birds – Year After Year, by Sally Roth

The Victory Garden Companion, by Michael Weishan and Laurie Donnelly

Month by Month Gardening in Georgia: What to Do Each Month to Have a Beautiful Garden All Year, by Walter Reeves and Erica Glasener

The Gaia Book of Organic Gardening, by Charlie Ryrie

The Organic Lawn Care Manual: A Natural Low-Maintenance System for a Beautiful, Safe Lawn, by Paul Boardway Tukey

Rodale's Vegetable Garden Problem Solver, by Fern Marshall Bradley

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.

Clean water

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County ordinances prohibit the use of storm drains for the disposal of anything other than rainwater and provide penalties for violations. If you know or see anyone involved in dumping or discharging wastes into storm drains or onto the ground, report it to the Stormwater Management Division, 678.376.7000, or at www.gwinnettstormwater.com.

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

The **Got Talent? competition** on April 13 from 7:00pm – 10:00pm at Pinckneyville Community Center in Norcross is for musical artists of all types – solos, duos, groups, and bands. Each artist must be 18 years or younger. Registration must include a fee of \$20 for solos or \$40 for groups plus a demo with at least two song possibilities. No profanity or vulgar language allowed. Tickets for the show will be \$5 each at the door. For more information, call 770.417.2200. Hosted by Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation and HOOKED teen volunteer club.

Register for the **Tribble Trot 5K Road Race** taking place on April 14 at 8:00am at Tribble Mill Park in Lawrenceville. Participants will run a paved course of 3.1 miles through the park's wooded terrain. Pre-registration is \$15 and includes a race t-shirt. Day of race is \$20. Medals will be given to the top three runners and winners in multiple age categories. Call 770.814.4920 for more information.

Moms, grab your little ones and come out to the Dacula Activity Building for **Milk and Cookies Day** on April 20 from 10:00am – 11:30am. There will be special entertainment along with snacks. Pre-registration required no later than one week prior to event. Parents and children must register individually, \$5 per person. Call 770.822.5414 for more information.

A **Weekend on the Wildside at Okefenokee Swamp** is April 20 – 22. Join us for one of our two unforgettable learning experiences this Spring to the "Land of the Trembling Earth" at Stephen Foster State Park. Campers will see a variety of unique species. Each person is responsible for transportation, equipment, and food. A pre-trip class will be held. Cost of \$60 includes camping, boating, and parking fees. Ages 8 and up. For more information, call 770. 814.4920.

Pack a bathing suit/towel and gear up for fun and games at **Kids Night Out** at Bogan Park on April 27 from 5:30pm – 9:00pm. Dinner will be served after swimming, so please give your child a light snack before arriving. Event fills quickly. Pre-registration required. Ages 6 to 10; cost is \$10.

Come join in an evening of nothing but line dancing at the Shorty Howell **Line Dance-a-thon** from 6:00pm – midnight on April 28! Bring a snack to share. Drinks will be provided. Early registration fee is \$5 per person or \$8 starting one week prior to the event. Call 770.814.4914.

Let's go Fly a Kite! April is "Fly a Kite Month" so come join us for a morning of fun kite flying at the Shorty Howell Park football field in Duluth! Bring your own kite to fly or make one on-site. Professional kite enthusiasts will perform kite flying demonstrations. Prizes will be awarded. The event is April 28 from 9:00am – noon. Cost is \$3. For more information, call 770.814.4914.

Mother's Day Gift Making on April 28 is a one-day event at George Pierce Community Center in Suwanee, where boys and girls will learn how to create beautiful silk flower arrangements, flower plant projects, Mother's Day cards, and bookmarks. Ages 3 – 5

will create gifts from 10:30am – noon, while ages 6 – 9 will create gifts from 11:00am – 12:30pm. Cost is \$25. Call 770.831.4173 for more information.

The next generation of great fishermen will be practicing their skills in the annual **Catfish Round-Up Fishing Derby for Kids** on May 5 at the Centerville Community Center. Bring your fishing poles, blankets, and picnic baskets, and get ready to have fun. Fishing bait and some snacks will be provided while supplies last. This free event is open to children ages 16 and under without a fishing license. For more information, call 770.985.4713 or visit www.centervillecommunitycenter.com.

For a complete listing of programs and classes, check out **Gwinnett LIFE® magazine** at www.gwinnettparks.com, or pick up a copy at your local library, park, Gwinnett Convention and Visitors Bureau, or the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center. For more information, call 770.822.8840.

SeniorNet

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Some graduates use their new skills to find employment but most volunteer to work on newsletters, websites, and databases for community organizations and churches in addition to doing personal research and communicating with friends and family. Studies have shown that computer use helps seniors maintain mental acuity and deters mental aging.

Gwinnett Board of Commissioners Chairman **Charles Bannister** said, "I'm delighted that this deserving program has won national recognition. It is a vital part of the programming at our two senior centers, and we are pleased to provide the facilities for it."

Representatives of the County will accept the award on behalf of the two SeniorNet Centers in Washington, D.C., on April 26.

For more information, call the Gwinnett Senior Center at 770.564.4699.

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

The County Line is published monthly by the Gwinnett County Communications Division to inform residents about County services and items of interest. For more information or to submit newsletter suggestions, call 770.822.7035 or e-mail heathersawyer@gwinnettcountry.com. The County Line is also available on the County's website, www.gwinnettcountry.com.