

county Line

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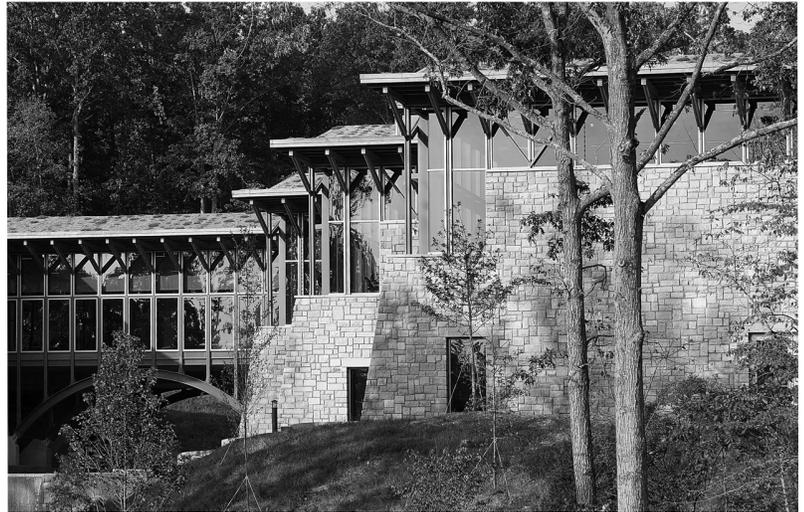
SPLOST-funded Environmental & Heritage Center gets energy gold

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) has awarded a gold level Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating to the Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center (GEHC) in the new commercial construction category. The LEED system is a national benchmark for design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings.

"This project was Gwinnett County's first green building and our new police training facility is our second," said Board Chairman **Charles Bannister**, *"I'm proud to announce that GEHC has been named one of the top 20 finalists for a Sustainable Communities Award from the National Association of Counties."* The Board of Commissioners helped the publicly-funded educational center lay the groundwork for a sustainable design philosophy. Gwinnett County created the Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center in 2003 to address environmental concerns.

"The GEHC is a lead-by-example approach to education," said District 1 Commissioner **Lorraine Green**. *"It demonstrates to businesses, educators, students, and citizens how we can all work to improve the world around us."* The facility was developed through a collaboration of the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners, the Gwinnett County Public School System, the University of Georgia, and the Gwinnett Environmental &

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The award-winning Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center

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Around Gwinnett



County programs receive national recognition

This year, the National Association of Counties (NACo) has named Gwinnett a winner three times in various awards competitions. Success really does live here.

In April, Parks and Recreation received the *Acts of Caring Award* for its two SeniorNet Learning Centers at the Bethesda Park Senior Center and at the new Prime Timers Pointe Senior Center at George Pierce Park. Our Youth Volunteer Centers won this award in 2005.

Senior Services won an *Achievement Award* for its value-added safety pro-

gram that trains its volunteers to identify and correct safety hazards as they visit about 450 homebound seniors to deliver Meals On Wheels or provide light housekeeping services. Last year, Gwinnett won in two categories for our Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and trench safety programs.

In June, the County got word that the Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center (GEHC) was named a finalist for the *2007 Sustainable Communities Award*. NACo will announce the final winners this fall.

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Advice from the Tax Commissioner

Look for your property tax bill in the mail, note new installment dates

The Gwinnett County Tax Commissioner has mailed 2007 property tax bills with new installment dates. As in past years, this is the only bill that will be mailed. It includes payment coupons and reply envelopes for both installment payments.

The first installment amount shown on the tax bill must be paid by September 15, 2007, or the taxpayer may pay the entire amount by this date. The second installment is due November 15, 2007. Installments not paid by the stated due dates will incur a five percent penalty. In addition, interest will begin to accrue at the rate of one percent per month beginning on November 16.

As an added convenience, more property tax payment locations are available this year. Gwinnett taxpayers have the option of making 2007 property tax payments in person at two locations: the Property Tax Customer Service Office in the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center in Lawrenceville and at the Tax Commissioner's North Gwinnett Motor Vehicle tag office located on Mall of Georgia Boulevard in Buford. Both of these locations will process property tax payments and provide receipts to taxpayers.

Other payment options include:

- Payment drop off locations at each tag office (anytime)
- Telephone payments using banking information on the Tax Commissioner's TaxTalk 24 line, 770.822.8800
- Credit card payments at gwinnetttaxcommissioner.com (convenience fees apply)

Customer services offered in tag offices

The Tax Commissioner's five branch tag offices provide many services to Gwinnett County residents. As an agent for the State of Georgia, these Tax Commissioner offices process title applications for vehicles, register vehicles, and issue tags and renewals. In addition, these offices:

- Collect *ad valorem* taxes
- Collect state sales taxes on certain vehicles purchased from out-of-state
- Issue disabled parking placards
- Collect insurance lapse fees
- Issue replacement registration cards
- Process senior emissions waivers
- Provide information and assistance on all vehicle title and registration issues

Additionally, the North Gwinnett tag office on Mall of Georgia Boulevard now processes property tax payments and collects homestead exemption applications. The tag offices in Lawrenceville, Norcross, Peachtree Corners, and Snellville have drop-off boxes for property tax payments.

The Tax Commissioner's tag offices cannot provide these services to non-residents of Gwinnett County. Customers also sometimes mistakenly believe tag offices issue driver's licenses, boat registrations, business licenses or emission repair waivers, or that they process traffic and parking tickets. These services are performed by other government offices.

Vehicle registration computer shutdowns scheduled for 2007

The Georgia Department of Revenue is performing scheduled maintenance on its vehicle registration computer system over several weekends throughout 2007. During these scheduled maintenance periods, the vehicle registration system will be inaccessible to tag offices. The impact will be as follows:

- The Tax Commissioner's North Gwinnett Branch Tag Office, located at 2735 Mall of Georgia Boulevard in Buford, will be closed on the Saturday of each weekend scheduled for maintenance
- Internet and telephone tag renewals will not be available during each maintenance period

The scheduled maintenance periods during the remainder of 2007 are:

- September 14 at 7:00pm until September 17 at 6:00am
- December 7 at 7:00pm until December 10 at 6:00am

Call 770.822.8818 or send an e-mail to tag@gwinnettcountry.com for more information.

Property Tax Customer Service: 770.822.8800

Motor Vehicles Customer Service: 770.822.8818

www.gwinnetttaxcommissioner.com

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Heritage Center Foundation. The unique partnership of government and education has become a model for future endeavors. Funds from the voter-approved SPLOST program paid for design and construction of the building.

The center offers interactive exhibits designed for K-12 education that also encourage adult and family audiences to explore the historical impact of water on our everyday lives and the water management challenges we must face in the future. District 4 Commissioner **Kevin Kenerly** said, "The primary goal of the GEHC is to educate its visitors about the philosophy of sustainability. Changing old habits is hard, but learning is a never-ending process."

New novel by Georgia author Ferrol Sams feature title of Gwinnett Reads

The Gwinnett County Public Library has chosen *Down Town*, a new novel by Georgia author and physician Ferrol Sams, as the **2007 Gwinnett Reads** featured title. Gwinnett Reads is the annual countywide reading event sponsored by the library and seeks to encourage Gwinnett residents from across the county to come together around the common goal of reading the same book.

Gwinnett Reads was first introduced by the library in 2003 and has continued to grow in popularity and attendance. **Gwinnett Reads** programming includes public lectures, panel discussions, and book discussion groups at library branches and other locations throughout Gwinnett County. This year's reading program will culminate with an event featuring Dr. Sams. Meet the author on August 11 at 8:00pm at the Gwinnett Performing Art Center. Tickets are \$10.

Ferrol Sams is the author of seven previous books, including his highly-acclaimed first novel, *Run With the Horsemen*, which he published in 1982 at age 60. Often described as a consummate story teller, Dr. Sams is a native of Fayette county, Georgia, where he has practiced medicine since 1951.

Down Town recounts life in a small Georgia town, from the period just following the end of the Civil War up to the modern era. The setting of the new novel is a rural Georgia county that will in time become part of the larger Atlanta metropolis.

For updates pertaining to **Gwinnett Reads** programs and activities, or to reserve a copy of *Down Town*, visit gwinnetreads.org.

NACo awards

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Also in June, GEHC received a prestigious Gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification from the U.S. Building Council for the building's energy-efficient design and construction.

"We're doing a lot of things right in Gwinnett County, and all this national recognition just confirms what we already knew. We will continue to provide outstanding service to all Gwinnett residents," said County Administrator **Jock Connell**.



Check It Out!

Lose yourself in someone else's life for a change! Great memoirs and biographies are available at your local branch library for fall reading.

Katie: The Real Story, by Edward Klein

Coltrane: The Story of a Sound, by Ben Ratliff

The Last Mrs. Astor: A New York Story, by Frances Kiernan

Heart in the Right Place: A Memoir, by Carolyn Jourdan

Diana: Her Story, by the editors of *People* magazine

Eden's Outcasts: The Story of Louisa May Alcott and Her Father, by John Matteson

It's All About Him: Finding the Love of My Life, by Denise Jackson with foreword by Alan Jackson

Hugo Chavez: Venezuelan President and Provocateur, by Cristina Marciano and Alberto Barrera Tyszka

Celebrity Detox, by Rosie O'Donnell

The Immortalists: Charles Lindbergh, Dr. Alexis Carrel and Their Daring Quest to Live Forever, by David Friedman

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 gwinnettpl.org.

DeShong Park opens this month

A grand opening celebration will be held Saturday, August 11, from 10:00am – 2:00pm for the new DeShong Park in Stone Mountain. Enjoy free children's activities, skateboarding safety clinics and demonstrations, and horse-shoe and basketball demonstrations. Call 770.822.8840 for more information.

Pet Corner



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

Let's re-examine the methods our forefathers used to conserve water at the **Rain Barrel Workshop** on August 4. Participants will receive a 55-gallon barrel ready to collect free rainwater to use in your garden or pond. Cost is \$40 per barrel. Sessions (11:00am and 2:00pm) are limited to 20 participants each. You can call 770.904.3500 to pre-register. Admission to the Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center is an additional fee. The GEHC is located at 2020 Clean Water Drive in Buford.

Enjoy a live music performance by Full Circle at **Grounds 'N' Sounds** on August 10 at the Lawrenceville Female Seminary. Admission is \$5. Starbucks Coffee, drinks, and desserts available for purchase. Alcohol, dancing, and smoking not permitted. The doors open at 8:00pm. Call 770.822.5178 to sign up for monthly e-mail newsletter.

Explore your surroundings on the **Heritage Hike** at the Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center on August 18. Meet at the ticket counter to join staff on our beautiful, wooded acreage to explore the lives of early

inhabitants and settlers of Gwinnett County. Hikes take place at 10:30am and 1:00pm. Hikes with young children will be shorter, strollers are welcome. Please wear appropriate footwear. Free with paid admission and for GEHC members.

The Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center will host **Club Method** for middle and high school students on August 18 from 1:00pm – 2:30pm. Join classmates and bring your friends for the 411 on the exciting world of science!

On August 22 it's time to **VAN GO!** Travel with Pinckneyville Park Community Center to Atlanta's High Museum of Art. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Remember to bring lunch money. Cost is \$10 plus \$15 museum admission. Pre-registration is required, 770.417.2212. Meet at 10:00am at Pinckneyville Park Community Center in Norcross.

Pack a bathing suit and towel and gear up for fun and games at **Kids' Night Out** at Bogan Park in Buford on August 24 from 5:30pm –

9:00pm. Must be on time in order to swim. Please give your child a light snack before arriving as dinner will be served after swimming. Ages 6 – 10. Cost is \$10. Pre-registration is required, 770.614.2060

Seniors ages 50 and up, sign up now for the **Low Country Boil** August 24 from 1:00pm – 3:00pm. Enjoy music, fun, and a delicious low country dinner at the Gwinnett Senior Center, all for only \$5. Register by August 15 at 770.564.4680. The Gwinnett Senior Center is located in Bethesda Park in Lawrenceville.

Come to the **Line Dance Workshop** on August 25 and receive dance instruction from local instructors. Pre-register by calling 770.814.4914 and get free entry into the Line Dance-a-thon that night! Workshop begins at 6:00pm. Fee is \$25 at the door. Shorty Howell Park Activity Building is in Duluth.

The Shorty Howell **Line Dance-a-thon** will be a fun evening of nothing but line dancing! Event is August 25 from 6:00pm – midnight. Bring a snack to share; drinks will be provided. The cost is \$5 if you register by August 18, after that it is \$8. Call 770.814.4914.

Moonlight and Music is a series of five free concerts produced by Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation and the Lawrenceville Tourism and Trade Association. Concerts are held on the lawn of the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse every fourth Friday, May through September. For more information, check out visitlawrenceville.com.

GEHC ... cont'd from page 1

The facility was designed by Lord, Aeck & Sargent and built by Juneau Construction Co. The project has received awards from *Environmental Design + Construction* magazine, the Associated Builders and Contractors of Georgia, and the American Institute of Architects.

To get LEED certification, a building must meet stringent prerequisites and achieve a minimum number of points. Successful projects can receive Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum certification.

"From the very beginning, one of the County's criteria for this facility was that it should pursue a LEED rating," said **Steve Cannon**, GEHC executive director. *"This is a highly complex design and something that's never been done before. Yet it came in on time, under budget, and exceeded our expectations. The center is a living, working tool that is educating people about management of our precious natural resources.*

Gwinnett County residents truly have a jewel here that they can treasure for many years."

The building and grounds model sustainable design and construction techniques to minimize disturbance to the site and maximize energy efficiency. The two-story, 59,000-square-foot building uses 75 percent less potable water and 35 percent less energy than a conventional building of the same size. Highlights include a 40,000-square-foot green roof—the largest sloped green roofing system in the United States. A cascading water feature draws non-potable reuse water from a nearby wastewater treatment facility and uses it to provide air conditioning, irrigate vegetation, and flush toilets.

The center offers a wide variety of programs and recreation for K-12 education, adults, and families including workshops, hikes, facility rentals, and birthday party packages. More information is available at gwinnettEHC.com.

countyline

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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@gwinnettcounty.com. The County Line is also available on the County's website, gwinnettcounty.com.