



county Line

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SPLOST: Historic gristmill will be raised

Gwinnett commissioners in December approved a contract for the first phase of a new park in Lawrenceville, Freeman's Mill Park, an old gristmill on the 12-acre site off Alcovy Road that was used to grind grain as recently as 1986. "It is a superb example of a typical rural gristmill found along rivers throughout Georgia in the mid-19th century," said Community Services Director **Phil Hoskins**.

The mill was built on the Alcovy River between 1868 and 1879 by brothers John Griffin and Levi J. Loveless and was one of 1,262 water-powered mills in the state at the time. By 1996, it was said to be one of only 15 mills in the state in working order and the only one in Gwinnett County. At that time it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places for its significance in architecture, engineering, industry, and social history.

After the Loveless brothers ran the mill, W. Scott Freeman and his son, Winfield, owned it until it was purchased in 1915 by Newt Pharr, who owned five other mills in the county. Newt's great-grandson, Lewis Swann, purchased the mill in 1946 and it remained in his family

until the County bought the mill and surrounding property in 2001.

The first phase of park construction will raise the historic mill five feet to get it above the current regulated floodplain. Construction will include a new foundation and retaining wall, refurbishing the water wheel and windows, and adding a new roof, siding, and doors. The \$434,324 contract was awarded to Hogan Construction Group, LLC.

"It's exciting to preserve Gwinnett's rich history while creating a beautiful park for local residents to enjoy," said Board Chairman **Charles Bannister**.

Phase two of Freeman's Mill Park will be awarded by a separate contract early next year. It will feature a playground, picnic pavilion, half-mile multi-purpose trail, parking, and restroom facilities.

Funding for both phases comes from the 2005 SPLOST. The County bought the land and mill in 2001 through the Georgia Greenspace Program.

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Around Gwinnett



Trash service continues under old system

In response to a court injunction against the County's new solid waste plan that would have taken effect the first of the year, Gwinnett officials agreed to extend service agreements with current trash service providers to ensure that citizens will continue to receive garbage service.

"The County's first order of business is to make sure that a group of approved private waste haulers is in place and working in January," said County Administrator **Jock Connell**. "Gwinnett is back to a multi-provider approach with residents choosing their trash haulers based on their ability to provide service as authorized by county government."

Residents have the opportunity to extend trash service with their current haulers or choose one of the nine haulers who have agreed to provide services in the County:

- Advanced Disposal Service Atlanta, LLC: 770.381.6420
- Allied Waste Industries: 770.339.9393
- Robertson Sanitation: 770.921.7337
- Red Oak Sanitation, Inc.: 770.455.7819
- Sanitation Solutions, Inc.: 770.886.7323
- Southern Sanitation: 770.455.8186
- Waste Industries: 678.328.1650
- Waste Management of Atlanta: 404.799.2717
- Waste Pro of Georgia, Inc.: 770.777.1447

Trash haulers will continue to pick up the following recyclables once a week with residents' curbside garbage service: newspapers and inserts, plastic drink and detergent bottles, aluminum cans, steel cans, glass bottles, and jars.

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Advice from the Tax Commissioner

Helpful information on applying for homestead exemptions

Several types of homestead exemptions have been enacted to reduce the burden of *ad valorem* taxation for eligible homeowners. These exemptions apply to property owned and occupied by a taxpayer as his or her legal residence as of January 1 of the tax year. Also, any vehicles owned by Gwinnett County homeowners must be registered in Gwinnett County.

You may apply for regular homestead exemptions year-round, but you must apply by March 1 to receive the exemption for that tax year. You may apply in several ways: online, by telephone, by mail, or in person.

Regular homestead exemptions are automatically renewed each year unless there is a change in ownership, a name or spelling correction on the deed, the taxpayer seeks to qualify for a different type of exemption, or the eligibility requirements can no longer be met by the homeowner. Only one person needs to apply if more than one name appears on the deed.

In addition to the regular homestead exemption, several special homestead exemptions exist for eligible seniors, certain disabled persons including veterans, and others. When applying for special homestead exemptions, you may be required to provide your prior year income tax returns, as many special exemptions require income verification.

To view all exemptions and their requirements, contact the Tax Commissioner's office.

Help reduce water pollution

During every rain storm, pollutants wash from streets, sidewalks, and driveways through storm drains and directly into our streams, rivers, and lakes. This pollution is commonly known as *nonpoint source pollution* because it comes from diffuse sources rather than single sources such as factories or industrial plants. Such pollution accumulates in our waterways, where it threatens the water we use for both recreation and drinking.

Most outdoor drains are storm drains. If a drain catches rainwater, it is probably a storm drain. Rainwater, along with any pollutants in the water, flows through the storm drains directly to streams without any treatment. Our individual contributions to nonpoint source pollution may seem minor, but the combined effect over a large area like Gwinnett County can be serious.

What can be done to stop nonpoint source pollution in its tracks? It's simple. Be aware of what is entering the storm drains near your

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Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday hours

Lawrenceville and Norcross Tag Offices

Closed: Monday, January 19, 2009, and Friday, January 23, 2009

Peachtree Corners and Snellville Tag Offices

Closed: Monday, January 19, 2009, through Tuesday, January 20, 2009

North Gwinnett Tag Office

Closed: Monday, January 19, 2009, through Wednesday, January 21, 2009

Katherine Sherrington Tax Commissioner

Property Tax Customer Service

770.822.8800 • tax@gwinnettcounty.com

Motor Vehicles Customer Service

770.822.8818 • tag@gwinnettcounty.com

www.gwinnetttaxcommissioner.com

Winter weather emergency preparedness planning

With the temperatures getting colder and the potential for icy conditions on the rise, the Gwinnett County Department of Fire and Emergency Services offers the following tips for staying safe and warm. The primary concern during the winter months is loss of heat, power, gas, and telephone service. There may be a shortage of essential supplies in the home such as food, water, and medicines. Every household should have an emergency preparedness plan in place. Post important numbers by the telephone such as utility companies and emergency responders. The plan should include a winter weather kit that can be put together easily and should include, but not be limited to, the following items:

- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Battery-powered NOAA weather radio and a portable AM/FM radio (these may be your only link to the outside world in the event of a disaster or major storm)
- Extra food and water such as non-perishable/high-energy foods and snacks that don't require refrigeration or cooking
- Extra medications
- Extra baby items, especially if you have infants or small children in the house
- First-aid supplies

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Winter weather ...cont'd from page 2

- Blankets, sleeping bags, and extra clothing for warmth
- Charge cell phones ahead of time, especially if you know that inclement weather is possible in your area
- If you have a fireplace, gather and store extra firewood in a dry sheltered area of your home

Be sure to install and maintain smoke detectors as well as carbon monoxide alarms. Develop a home escape plan and conduct fire drills with the entire family. The use of home heating devices such as wood stoves, fireplaces, and space heaters can increase the potential for a fire to occur, so have all home-heating appliances serviced annually by a certified technician. Kerosene heaters should be used in a well ventilated area. If you are using space heaters, remember to leave plenty of space around the device, at least three to four feet away from anything combustible.

There are also some things that you should know to be prepared if you are caught in your vehicle during extreme cold or a winter storm. You should avoid being out on the roads if at all possible, especially during icy conditions, but if you are on the roads, observe these following precautions:

- Slow down and watch for other motorists
- Plan your travel and check the weather conditions for your area or the area to which you are traveling

- Discuss your travel plans and routes with a family member or friend
- Fully winterize your vehicle before the cold weather season starts
- Carry a winter storm survival kit in your car. Include a blanket; sleeping bag; flashlight (with extra batteries); portable radio; first-aid kit; high-calorie, non-perishable food items that don't require cooking; bottled water; road flares; extra clothing; tissue paper; a small bucket of sand; waterproof matches; windshield scraper; and jumper cables

Pollution ...cont'd from page 2

home and workplace. Maintain your vehicle to prevent oil leaks. Wash your car on a grassy area or at a professional car wash that properly handles wastewater. Purchase less toxic cleaners and household chemicals. Pick up after your pet and remember to keep yard waste and trash out of the street. Landscape your yard with native vegetation that requires less water, fertilizer, and pesticides. In short, don't let anything other than rainwater get into a storm drain. Watch for polluters in your area and report problems to Gwinnett County's 24-hour call center at 678.376.7000.

For additional information, contact Gwinnett County's Stormwater Management Division by visiting www.gwinnettstormwater.com, or call 678.376.6826.



Check It Out!

Liven up your commute as you move into the New Year by listening to these great stories on CD:

A Great Deliverance, by Elizabeth George

Shroud For a Nightingale, by P.D. James

The School of Essential Ingredients, by Erica Bauermeister

Agincourt, by Bernard Cornwell

Black Ops, by W.E.B. Griffin

The Charlemagne Pursuit, by Steve Berry

Rabbit, Run, by John Updike

Knit Two: A Friday Night Knitting Club Novel, by Kate Jacobs

Gorilla Black, by Seven

The Sunday Brunch Diaries, by Norma Jarrett

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

If you are looking for a companionable addition to your household, you will find lots of adorable cats, dogs, puppies, and kittens at the Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center.

Visit www.gwinnettanimalcontrol.com to see photos of all the critters currently up for adoption or drop by the shelter located at 884 Winder Highway in Lawrenceville or call 770.339.3200. In an attempt to prevent pet overpopulation, all cats and dogs are spayed or neutered before adoption.



Save money and time: Pay your water bill online

Beginning January 1, Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources customers will be able to view and pay their water bills online at www.gwinnetth2o.com.

Save Money: No stamps to purchase and the online service is free

Save Time: Pay your bill when it is convenient for you

Visit www.gwinnetth2o.com for updates.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND GWINNETT

Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation facilities will be **closed January 1** in observance of New Year's Day. All parks will remain open for self-directed use.

Rock out with food, dancing, and a talent show at the **Teen Night Party**, January 16 from 6:30pm to 10:30pm. Ages 11-15; \$15 per person or \$5 for talent show participants. Call 770.614.2060 to pre-register. Party will be held at the Bogan Park Community Recreation Center, 2723 North Bogan Road, Buford.

Dig your swimsuit and beach towel from the bottom of the drawer and get ready for a **Kids' Night Out**, January 23 from 5:30pm to 9:00pm. Ages 6 - 10; \$10/person. Call 770.614.2060 to pre-register. Event will be held at the Bogan Park Community Recreation Center, 2723 North Bogan Road, Buford.

Check out the talent show at 6:30pm and then hang out for fun, food, and dancing until 10:30pm at the **Teen Night Party**, January 23. Ages 11 - 15; \$15/person or \$5 for talent show participants. Call 770.417.2200 to pre-register. Party will be held at the Pinckneyville Park Community Recreation Center, 4650 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, Norcross.

Calling all brides! Hundreds of ideas from caterers, photographers, florists, event planners, and others to make your day special at the **Winter Bridal and Fashion Show**, January 25 from 2:00pm to 5:00pm. \$3/person advanced reservations or \$5/person at the door. Ongoing door prizes, a grand prize, and tours of the beautiful Gwinnett Historic Courthouse venue, 185 East Crogan Street, Lawrenceville. Call 770.822.5450.

Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation sponsors 11 different **senior recreation clubs** at various parks located throughout the county. Find out how you can become active by calling 770.564.4680.

For more information about the events and services sponsored by Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation or Health and Human Services, visit www.gwinnettcountry.com under *News and Events* to download the *Gwinnett Life*® and *One Stop* newsletters.

Making the switch to digital television

On February 17, 2009, all broadcast television stations will be switching over from using both digital and analog programming to only providing digital television (DTV). Make sure your TV is ready for the switch. Visit www.DTV.gov or call the Federal Communications Commission at 1.888.225.5322 for more information.

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday January 19, 2009

All offices, with the exception of those operations required for the comfort and safety of the citizens of Gwinnett County, will be closed Monday, January 19, 2009, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. All offices will resume regular working hours on Tuesday, January 20, 2009.

Trash...cont'd from page 1

Residents who paid to activate service with Advanced Disposal in 2009 will receive a refund and notifications of when they will expect to have the trash carts removed. Residents with Waste Pro carts will need to contact Waste Pro to discuss cart retrieval and refund information. Contact Advanced Disposal at 678.684.1493 or Waste Pro at 770.295.0800 or 770.451.9395 for more information.

"Residents need to understand that the underlying court case is ongoing and will take several months to resolve, at a minimum. The County will revisit the solid waste ordinance in 2009 to determine the best plan to ensure that we reduce waste and increase recycling opportunities while providing the best possible plan for our residents," Connell said. *"We appreciate our residents' and the current waste haulers' patience as we navigate through this process."*

Gwinnett officials advise residents to contact their prospective trash hauler with questions about setting up or continuing their service. A call center has been set up at County offices to assist with general questions about the solid waste plan. If you have questions, please call 770.822.7141 between 8:00am and 5:00pm or visit www.gwinnettcountry.com. The call center will be operable as this process continues.

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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 770.822.7135 or e-mail shaunieka.taste@gwinnettcountry.com. The *County Line* is also available on the County's website, www.gwinnettcountry.com.