



# News for Neighborhoods

A newsletter for gwinnettcounty homeowners

September 30, 2011

## Other newsletters:

- [GC Connection](#)
- [Gwinnett LIFE](#)
- [OneStop](#)
- [Tax & Tag News](#)
- [Waterwords](#)

## Dear Homeowner:

As a resident of Gwinnett County, you know there is always a lot going on in the community. [Gwinnett County Government](#) would appreciate your help keeping your neighbors informed by sharing the following information through your homeowner association newsletter, website, and e-mails and by talking to your friends and family. Click on *forward this e-mail to a friend* below to share this newsletter!

## I-85 Express lanes open October 1

The State Road and Tollway Authority announced that the I-85 Express Lanes will officially open tomorrow, Saturday, October 1.

What does this mean for you?

Peach Pass registration is required for all vehicles using the I-85 Express Lanes, including toll-exempt carpools with three or more occupants, transit vehicles, motorcycles, on-call emergency vehicles, and Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFV) with the proper AFV license plates (not including hybrids). Peach Pass accounts can be used for both the I-85 and GA 400 tolls.



How do you register?

Peach Pass registration also is available online at [www.PeachPass.com](http://www.PeachPass.com), by phone at 1.855.724.7277, and in person at two Department of Driver Services locations in Gwinnett County: 2211 Beaver Run Road in Norcross and 310 Hurricane Shoals Road in Lawrenceville.

To register for an account, you will need your contact and vehicle tag information and an initial prepaid amount of \$20. The Peach Pass sticks to your windshield and is electronically linked to a registered Peach Pass account. When you use the I-85 Express Lanes, tolls will be automatically deducted from your Peach Pass account.

For more information on Peach Pass and the I-85 Express Lanes, visit [www.PeachPass.com](http://www.PeachPass.com).

## Public Safety Fall Festival

Join Gwinnett County Police and Fire and Emergency Services for their annual [Public Safety Fall Festival](#) on Saturday, October 1 from 10:00am to 3:00pm at Coolray Field, home of the Gwinnett Braves.

Admission is free, but please bring canned food items for Gwinnett food bank shelves! Activities include touch-a-truck, blood drive, car and motorcycle show, and pet adoptions. There will also be a moon walk and a climbing wall along with free car seat checks, blood donations, a scavenger hunt, and a softball game between Gwinnett's police and fire departments.



## Gwinnett generates power from wastes

Gwinnett's [Water Resources](#) department started generating its own electricity using methane gas, a byproduct of sewage treatment. A new gas-to-energy facility at the F. Wayne Hill Water Resources plant near Buford can produce up to 40 percent of the plant's energy needs plus all the heat it needs to operate its anaerobic digesters. Bacteria in the egg-shaped digesters turn wastewater solids into methane gas at temperatures near 100 degrees Fahrenheit, reducing the waste that goes to landfills. The gas by-product was previously burned off as waste. County officials will celebrate the opening of this facility on October 11 at the F. Wayne Hill plant.

Construction will be finished next fall on a companion receiving facility for fats, oils and grease from restaurants and food service operations and other industrial waste. That waste will go into the digesters to increase methane production while helping reduce clogs in County sewers. Disposal fees will be comparable to the cost of other disposal options.

Water Resources used \$5 million in federal stimulus funds, a \$3.5 million federal grant and \$500,000 of local water/sewer funds to build the new facilities. The County must repay \$2 million over the next 20 years at 2 percent interest.

## Construction for new facilities at Harbins and Rabbit Hill parks underway

New facilities are coming to the County's largest park, Harbins Park east of Grayson. The park will have a multi-purpose (football/soccer/lacrosse) field with bleachers, a concession/restroom building, and a lighted walking track. There will also be a rental pavilion, a playground, a dog park, a three-acre lake, and a 1.5-mile paved trail through the lowlands adjacent to Cedar Creek.



Rabbit Hill Park near Dacula will add two soccer fields, a concession/restroom building, and a trail extension. The park will also have seven new baseball/softball fields, a multi-purpose field with a lighted walking track, playgrounds, and a six-acre lake that will provide irrigation water from an on-site well. The project also includes road improvements with a traffic signal and turn lanes at the intersection of Hurricane Shoals Road and Rabbit Hill Road.

These new park facilities were part of the 2009 SPLOST sales tax program and ground breaking ceremonies for these park enhancements were held September 30.

## Driver safety course offered to drivers over 50

AARP and [Gwinnett County Community Services](#) are hosting a driver safety course for drivers over 50 years of age. Join them October 11 from 9:00am to 3:30pm at the Gwinnett Medical Center Resource Center Oak Room, located at 665 Duluth Highway in Lawrenceville.

Cost is \$14 and \$12 for AARP members. Members must bring their insurance card to qualify for the discount.

## Workshop helps homeowners care for detention ponds

The [Department of Water Resources Stormwater Division](#) will host a free Detention Pond Maintenance Workshop for residents to learn how to care for detention ponds in their neighborhoods. The workshop will be held on Thursday, October 6 from 7:00pm to 8:00pm at the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center located at 75 Langley Drive in Lawrenceville.

Attendees who live in unincorporated Gwinnett County or the City of Lilburn could qualify for a five percent credit on their stormwater utility fees.

Interested residents may pre-register for the workshop by sending an e-mail with their name, address, and phone number to [dwrswreg@gwinnettcountry.com](mailto:dwrswreg@gwinnettcountry.com) or calling 678.376.7193.

## 2011 property tax process update

Gwinnett County taxpayers should have received their 2011 property tax bills; payment is due on November 15. As you may recall, the Board of Commissioners actually lowered the millage rate slightly this year, so many property tax owners will see a lower tax bill.

If you receive a property tax bill and have an open appeal on the value of the property, there will be a note mailed with your bill stating that you have been billed for 85 percent of your original property tax assessment. Be sure to pay this by November 15, and once the appeal is complete, you will either be billed or receive a check for the difference.

### Tax Assessor working with residents to settle property appeals

The [Tax Assessor's Office](#) received a total of 26,386 residential appeals and 4,834 commercial appeals for the 2011 tax year. Each appeal is reviewed by a staff or contracted appraiser to determine if the value should be adjusted or if it should be referred to the Board of Equalization for a decision. Thousands of the appealed values have been adjusted and accepted by the property owners when notified of the new value. Very few of the appeals remain which have not begun the review process.

If you have not received any communication concerning your properly filed 2011 appeal, please e-mail [assessor@gwinnettcountry.com](mailto:assessor@gwinnettcountry.com) for an estimated schedule for completion of the process.

Requests to be allowed to file an original 2011 appeal will be rejected as "untimely" due to the expiration of the appeal period on May 31, 2011. Notices of Current Assessment for 2012 are scheduled to be issued on April 6, 2012. These notices will allow the 2012 property values to be appealed within a 45 day period, ending on May 22, 2012.

### Looking for more property tax information?

The Tax Assessor's Office sends out the [Property Tax Almanac](#), a planned series of e-mails scheduled to be issued throughout the 2011 property tax process. Topics include: electronic filing of real property tax returns, issuance of Notices of Current Assessment, how to appeal, where to get e-forms and additional information, and tax billing and collection dates.

If you are interested in receiving the Property Tax Almanac, update your e-mail newsletter profile at [www.gwinnettcountry.com](http://www.gwinnettcountry.com) or by [clicking here](#).

### Where do your property taxes go?

Did you know that the average Gwinnett household pays less than \$1.15 a day to provide police, fire, and emergency medical services?

You can see where all your tax dollars go by using the new [Where your property taxes go](#) tool on the [County's website](#). Just enter your address or the fair market value of a home to get a complete breakdown of how much per day - or per year - goes to various local government services.



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