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#### Dear Emily,

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 emails and by talking to your friends and family.



#### County offices closed for Thanksgiving holiday: November 22 and 23

All Gwinnett County government offices, with the exception of those operations required for the comfort and safety of residents, will be closed Thursday, November 22 and Friday, November 23 for the Thanksgiving holiday. County offices will resume normal business hours on Monday, November 26. A Magistrate Court judge will be available at the Gwinnett County Detention Center.

**Thursday, November 22 is a trash and recycling holiday.** Pickups scheduled on that day will be rescheduled for Friday, November 23 and Friday pickups will be rescheduled for Saturday, November 24. Only Thursday and Friday pickups will be affected. See the complete holiday schedule at [www.sustainablegwinnett.com](http://www.sustainablegwinnett.com).

#### Keep flames off the holiday menu

The holiday season is a time when family and friends gather to share a meal. As preparations for the busy holidays get underway, firefighters want to encourage safe cooking practices. [Fire and Emergency Services](#) and the National Fire Protection Association are calling on all cooks to include the following fire safety tips in their recipes:

- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, remember to check it regularly; use a timer to remind yourself that something is on the stove or in the oven.
- Keep anything that could catch fire, such as oven mitts, wood utensils, food packaging, towels, or curtains away from your stovetop, oven, or any other heat producing appliance in the kitchen.
- Don't wear loose clothing or dangling sleeves while cooking; remember to stop, drop, and roll



Turkey Frying: What not to do

- if your clothes catch on fire and cool a burn injury with water until the pain goes away.
- Never attempt to cook if you are extremely tired or if you have consumed alcoholic beverages.
- Keep children and pets at a safe distance away from the oven or stove when cooking.
- Install and maintain smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in your home.

### Deep frying danger

If you're planning to deep-fry your holiday bird, please remember to follow proper fire safety precautions. Be sure to read the instructions for your fryer and completely thaw your turkey or chicken before frying it. [Watch this video](#) to see what can happen if you don't follow cooking instructions closely.

### Pleasant Hill Road bridge remains open for holiday shopping



Travelers and shoppers should enjoy a smooth drive through the Gwinnett Place Mall area during this busy holiday season. The Gwinnett County Department of Transportation will halt all lane closure activity on the Pleasant Hill Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) project in anticipation of higher traffic volumes in the area. **All construction-related lane closures will stop from Monday, November 19 through Wednesday, January 2.**

While all lane closure activity will be stopped, workers may be on site actively working on items outside the normal lanes of travel. Motorists are reminded to drive safely and obey the posted speeds, especially in work zones.

For more information on the Pleasant Hill DDI project, visit [www.gwinnettDDI.com](http://www.gwinnettDDI.com).

### The tradition continues with the 25<sup>th</sup> Lighting of the Tree

Continue the tradition this holiday season with Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation and the Lawrenceville Tourism and Trade Association as they host the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Lighting of the Tree on **Thanksgiving Day, November 22 at 5:00pm** at the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse, located at 185 Crogan Street in downtown Lawrenceville.



The tree lighting ceremony will begin at 6:00pm, illuminating 30,000 lights on the 30-foot Norway spruce. The evening's festivities also will include visits and photos with Santa Claus, Class Act Band leading carols, choreographed dance routines by Clogging Connection, music by Catherine Kimbro, face painting, and crafts. If you didn't get enough turkey and stuffing, food vendors will offer sweet treats and warm beverages. Visit [www.gwinnettparks.com](http://www.gwinnettparks.com) or call 770.822.5450 for more holiday events.

### Volunteer this holiday season

The holidays are a season of giving, and so many people are in need. While you may be short on funds this year, the gift of your time is just as valuable to charities and nonprofits in Gwinnett County. Whether you have just a few hours or lots of free time to spare, *Volunteer Gwinnett* can help you find the right volunteer opportunities.

*Volunteer Gwinnett* is a countywide volunteer program designed to involve more residents in volunteer activities associated with County government. Volunteers have been an important part of some County



departments and agencies for many years. The County's volunteer program has a bold goal of reaching 1 million volunteer hours by 2015. Residents may sign up for opportunities as individuals or with a group. To sign up as a volunteer, please visit [www.volunteergwinnett.net](http://www.volunteergwinnett.net).

### 8 tips to be safe during the holidays

The Gwinnett County Police Department will activate its Holiday Task Force beginning Thanksgiving night and continuing every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday through December 31. This initiative increases police presence at major retail outlets around the county. In addition, officers from the Crime Prevention Unit will be conducting vehicle safety checks during the holidays, encouraging shoppers to do their part to prevent property theft.

As you are out shopping for gifts and traveling during the holidays, the Police Department wants to remind you to be safe with these helpful tips:

- Do not drive under the influence of alcohol and drugs; call for a taxi, take public transportation, or have a designated driver.
- Observe your surroundings; report any suspicious or loitering people to the authorities.
- Store packages in your trunk and park your vehicle in a well-lit area.
- Don't shop alone, and when offered, let retail employees assist you with taking your merchandise to your vehicle.
- Don't carry large amounts of cash; use secure forms of payment such as a credit or debit card when purchasing items.
- Have merchandise delivered to a secured location when possible.
- If you are heading out of town, be sure to secure your home and designate someone you trust to collect your newspapers and mail.
- Don't announce on answering machines or social networking sites when you will be traveling away from home.



### Reduce the FOG in your pipes

Few problems cause a homeowner more grief than toilets and sinks that are backed up - especially during the holidays. Gwinnett County has one of the most advanced sewer systems, but even the best systems only work if the wastewater is able to make it to the treatment plants. The leading cause of collection system failure is fats, oils, and grease buildup in the sewer lines. Collectively known as FOG, fats, oils, and grease cost the County hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage and time spent removing it from the pipes, lift stations, and treatment plants.

Fortunately, much of this damage can be prevented by simply making sure FOG does not get into the collection system in the first place. Scraping your plates into the trash before you wash and rinse them, as well as making sure that all grease and cooking oils are put into containers and thrown away are a few simple steps you can take to help prevent a backup from happening.

So this holiday season, while you celebrate with friends and family, please make sure that fats, oils, and grease do not become unwanted guests. With your help, we can keep the pipes clear and the water flowing. If you have any questions, visit [www.unclogthefog.com](http://www.unclogthefog.com), or call James Jones at 678.376.6713.

### Take the healthy holiday challenge!

To help you take the healthy holiday challenge and keep from gaining weight over the holidays, here are some helpful tips from the [Gwinnett Cooperative Extension Service](#):

- **Track your consumption.** To control how much you eat, keep track of how much you eat and drink before you consume it. There are some great free phone apps created to help with this task.
- **Use smaller plates.** To make food less immediately available, use 7- to 9-inch plates during the holidays.
- **Save the calories for your food.** Offer calorie-free drinks such as water.
- **Use healthy substitutions.** Use healthier substitutions for ingredients in popular recipes such as applesauce instead of oil when you're baking.
- **Stay active.** Keep the party active by having dancing, playing games, or walking around the neighborhood to see holiday decorations.



Taking these easy steps will help prevent weight gain this holiday season. For more healthy tips, visit the Cooperative Extension Service [Education Resource](#).

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Communications Division  
770.822.7180  
[www.gwinnettcounty.com](http://www.gwinnettcounty.com)

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Gwinnett County Communications | 75 Langley Drive | Lawrenceville | GA | 30046