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December 9, 2015

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**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 emails and by talking to your friends and family.



**What's new on TVgwinnett?**



Gwinnett County brings you the latest news and happenings about your community through Eye on Gwinnett, our bi-weekly news program.

**What you'll see in this episode:**

- Budget comments welcome until year end
- Gwinnett Center is now Infinite Energy Center
- Parks and Recreation gains more honors
- SPLOST funds new medical examiner's office

There's still time to comment on the 2016 budget proposal

Gwinnett Commission Chairman Charlotte Nash presented a proposed \$1.5 billion budget for fiscal year 2016 to the Board of Commissioners during a [briefing](#) on November 17, 2015. Five county residents and business people served on Nash's budget review committee. After hearing presentations from elected officials and department directors in late August and early September, the group studied departmental business plans, budget needs, and revenue projections to make recommendations for the 2016 budget. Read more about the 2016 budget proposal [here](#).



Commissioners held a public hearing on Monday, December 7, 2015. Written comments are still welcome through an [online comment form](#) through **Thursday, December 31, 2015**. The Board expects to adopt the 2016 budget on **Tuesday, January 5, 2016**.

### Holiday performances by Gwinnett schools

Gwinnett County schools will spread the holiday spirit at the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center throughout December. Come out and enjoy the sounds of the holidays during your lunch break. Performances will take place through Friday, December 18 on the second floor of the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center, located at 75 Langley Drive in Lawrenceville, on the second floor across from the Jury Assembly Room. If you can't make the performances in person, check them out on TVgwinnett, the County's government access cable television, and on demand at [www.gwinnettcounty.com](http://www.gwinnettcounty.com).

### Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services offers holiday fire safety tips



The holidays are here again and it's time for strands of lights, decorated trees, and your favorite seasonal treats. If you're planning on cooking, decorating your home, or building a fire in the fireplace this year, please be mindful of fire safety. Each year, holiday season fires injure 2,000 individuals and cause more than \$500 million in damage.

Here are six tips for a safe holiday season with your family:

- **Cooking:** Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the U.S. Do not leave your stove unattended. If you must leave the room while cooking, set a timer or carry a pot holder to remind you that food is cooking.
- **Trees:** Select a fresh tree. Make sure the needles are green and hard to pull from the branch. Place your tree away from any heat source and keep the stand filled with water at all times.
- **Lights:** Inspect your lights every year to ensure there are no frays, bare spots, or holes in the insulation. Do not overload outlets with light strands and do not link more than three strands unless the directions specify that it's safe. Finally, do not leave your lights unattended while they are on.
- **Fireplaces:** Have your chimney and fireplace cleaned yearly to remove creosote buildup. Never burn wrapping paper, packing materials, or trash because these items can produce toxic gases. Wait until the ashes are cool before removing them from your fireplace and dispose of them in a non-combustible container.
- **Candles:** Do not use lit candles to decorate your tree and keep candles well away from flammable materials, decorations, or curtains. Never leave candles unattended or within the reach of children and always extinguish all candles before you leave the room.
- **Space heaters:** Give portable space heaters at least three to four feet in all directions. Space heaters should not be placed too close to combustible materials such as bedding, furniture, or curtains. Remember to turn the space heater off when leaving the home or going to sleep.

For more information about holiday safety, please visit [www.gwinnettsafety411.com](http://www.gwinnettsafety411.com).

**County offices closed for Christmas, New Year's holidays**

All Gwinnett County government offices, with the exception of those operations required for the comfort and safety of residents, will be closed **December 24** and **25** for the Christmas holiday and reopen on **December 28**. Offices will also be closed **January 1** for the New Year's holiday and reopen **January 4**. A Magistrate Court judge will be available at the Gwinnett County Detention Center during the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

Christmas Day and New Year's Day are trash and recycling holidays in unincorporated Gwinnett County. If your normal collection day takes place on one of these holidays, your collection will be delayed. Please visit [www.sustainablegwinnett.com](http://www.sustainablegwinnett.com) to view the detailed collection schedule. If you live within city limits, please contact your city hall for your trash and recycling schedule.

### Drop off your Christmas tree for recycling

Once the holidays are over, don't forget to recycle your Christmas tree. From December 26 through January 16 residents can drop off their **live, undecorated trees** at one of the [convenient locations](#) in Gwinnett County. The trees will be chipped during Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful's Bring One for the Chipper event on **Saturday, January 23** from **9:00am to noon** at **Bethesda Park**, located at **225 Bethesda Church Road in Lawrenceville**, near the soccer fields. The mulch from the trees will be used for County parks, roadway landscaping, facilities, etc.



Please note that unless you have a yard waste contract with your hauler, trees will not be collected curbside.

### Protect your plants from the winter cold



Cold winter days can be harsh on your landscape plants, so the Gwinnett Cooperative Extension Service suggests the following tips to protect your plants. Keep plants watered regularly to prevent leaves from drying due to cold air. Maintain a two- to three-inch layer of mulch around the plants at all times to insulate the root system and protect the soil from temperature fluctuations.

Gwinnett County is located in USDA hardiness zone 7b, which means that winter temperatures have the potential to drop as low as 5 degrees. If the temperature falls below 20 degrees, cover gardenias and camellias nightly with plastic anchored to the ground on all sides and remove it the following day. For more gardening and landscaping tips, contact the Cooperative Extension Service at 678.377.4010 or visit [www.gwinnettextension.com](http://www.gwinnettextension.com).

### Be an elections poll official

The Gwinnett Voter Registrations and Elections Division needs dedicated citizens to serve as paid poll officials for the busy 2016 election year. Successful poll officials demonstrate patience, enjoy working with people, take direction well, possess basic computer skills, and are detail-oriented. If you are interested in applying, please visit [www.gwinnettcountyjobs.com](http://www.gwinnettcountyjobs.com) and select the Elections Poll Official position.

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