

# News for Neighborhoods

A newsletter for gwinnettcountry homeowners

November 26, 2013

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## Dear Resident,

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.

 Forward to a Friend

## 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:

- Lighting of the Tree on November 28
- SPLOST update
- Budget public hearing on December 9

### Missed the Veterans Day ceremony?

If you missed this year's Veterans Day Ceremony, you can [check it out on TVgwinnett](#). This year's ceremony included a special tribute to Gwinnett County's Vietnam veterans.



## County offices closed for Thanksgiving holiday - November 28 and 29

All Gwinnett County government offices, with the exception of those operations required for the comfort and safety of residents, will be closed **Thursday, November 28 and Friday, November 29** for the Thanksgiving holiday. County offices will resume normal business hours on Monday, December 2. A Magistrate Court judge will be available at the Gwinnett County Detention Center.

Thursday, November 28 is a **trash and recycling holiday** for residents living in unincorporated Gwinnett County. Collection scheduled on that day will be rescheduled for Friday, November 29 and Friday collection will be rescheduled for Saturday, November 30. Only Thursday and Friday collections will be affected. If you live within city limits, please contact your city hall for your trash and recycling schedule.

## Don't forget! Lighting of the Tree takes place Thanksgiving night!

Continue the tradition this holiday season with Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation and the Lawrenceville Tourism and Trade Association as they host the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Lighting of the Tree on Thanksgiving Day, **November 28 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 Southern Ballet Theatre, and singer Katie Wolf performing holiday "cup" songs. For kids, there will be face painting, Whoville hair, and crafts starting at 5:00pm. If you didn't get enough turkey and stuffing, food vendors will offer sweet treats and warm beverages. For details about this and other holiday events, visit [www.gwinnettparks.com](http://www.gwinnettparks.com).

## Turn off automatic sprinkler systems during freezing weather

As freezing temperatures move in this season, the Georgia Department of Transportation reminds you to **turn off sprinkler systems** with automatic timers set to run overnight.

Automatic sprinkler systems are often timed to operate at night and when spray from the sprinkler is blown onto the road or water drains onto the road, black ice forms, creating a hazard for motorists.

The Department urges residents and businesses to take a moment and **ensure that automatic sprinkler systems are turned off**. With sub-freezing temperatures on the way, motorists are cautioned to be on the lookout for icy patches or black ice, especially early in the morning.

## Chairman Nash presents proposed 2014 budget

Gwinnett Commission Chairman Charlotte Nash formally presented a [proposed \\$1.5 billion budget](#) for fiscal year 2014 to the Board of Commissioners during a [briefing](#) on November 19, 2013. After a public hearing and period for public comment, commissioners will vote on the budget proposal on **January 7, 2014**, during their first meeting of the year.



Four county residents and business people served on Nash's budget review committee. After hearing [presentations from elected officials and department directors](#) in September, the group studied departmental business plans, budget needs, and revenue projections to make recommendations for the 2014 budget. Despite millions of dollars in justified requests, the proposed budget includes funding for only a small number of new resources and initiatives. [Read more about the proposed budget.](#)

Residents may make comments in person during the **budget public hearing**, which will be held on Monday, December 9, 2013, at 7:00pm in the [GJAC](#) auditorium. They can also **submit comments online** via a [comment form](#) on the county's website through Tuesday, December 31, 2013.

## Don't let FOG cause a clog

Few problems cause a homeowner more grief than a backed up toilet or sink. Gwinnett County has one of the most advanced sewer systems in the world, 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 that build up 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 plants. Fortunately much of this damage can be prevented simply by making sure FOG doesn't get into the system in the first place.



The best way to prevent FOG from causing clogs is to **put as much food waste in the trash as possible**. Remember the drain is not a dump. So what can we do about it? A good place to start is banning the garbage disposal. Garbage disposals simply chop clog-causing food scraps into smaller pieces; they don't get rid of them. Scrape leftover food from dishes and cookware into the trash before you wash them and pour grease and oil waste into containers to throw away. These simple tips will help make sure unwanted sewer backups don't ruin your fun.

For more information on Gwinnett's FOG Program, visit [www.uncllogthefog.com](http://www.uncllogthefog.com).

### Water Resources offers workshop to help you reduce your water use

Learning how to reduce your water usage means lower water bills every month! Water Resources is hosting the free **Homeowner H2O workshop**, which provides knowledge and tools for homeowners to improve water efficiency inside and outside their homes. The workshop will take place on **Thursday, December 5 from 7:00pm to 8:00pm** in the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Auditorium, located at 75 Langley Drive in Lawrenceville. This workshop will focus on leak detection and repair, installing water-efficient fixtures, and ways to increase your family's water-saving behaviors.

If you attend, you will receive a low-flow retrofit kit, outdoor water efficiency kit, do-it-yourself home water audit guide, and information on how to apply for Gwinnett County's toilet rebate program. Please pre-register by sending an email with your name, address, and phone number to [dwrconserve@gwinnettcountry.com](mailto:dwrconserve@gwinnettcountry.com) or by calling 678.376.6722.

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

The holidays are here again! 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 five tips to help you have a safe season with your family:

1. **Trees:** Select a fresh tree. Make sure the needles are green and hard to pull from the branch. Bounce the tree on the ground before buying. If the needles fall off, it may be a fire hazard. Place your tree away from any heat sources and keep the stand filled with water at all times. When you're done with your tree, dispose of it properly by having it recycled or hauled away by a community pick up service.
2. **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. 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.
3. **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. Burn only seasoned wood and always use a screen to prevent sparks from entering your home. Always wait until the ashes are cool before removing them from your fireplace. Dispose of them in a non-combustible container.
4. **Candles:** December is the peak month for candle-related fire incidents. Do not use lit candles to decorate your tree. Also keep candles well away from flammable decorations, curtains or substances. Never leave candles unattended or within the reach of children and always extinguish all candles before you leave the room or sleep.
5. **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. If you are using a turkey fryer, use extreme caution. Always use fryers outdoors on flat surfaces and monitor the temperature constantly. Always completely thaw your turkey before frying and be careful with marinades.

Please visit [www.gwinnettfire.org](http://www.gwinnettfire.org).

## Be safe while shopping 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. 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 during the holidays, the Police Department wants to remind you to be safe with these helpful tips:

- Observe your surroundings; report any suspicious activity or loitering to the police.
- 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 shopping.
- Have merchandise delivered to a secured location when possible.

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