

# Gwinnett County Government NEWS RELEASE

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Board of Commissioners

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## **HISTORIC GRISTMILL WILL BE RAISED**

(Lawrenceville, Ga., Dec. 3, 2008) – Gwinnett commissioners on Tuesday 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 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-19<sup>th</sup> 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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