

Gwinnett County Government

NEWS RELEASE

Charles E. Bannister, Chairman
Board of Commissioners

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STIMULUS, OTHER GRANTS IMPACT GWINNETT

(Lawrenceville, Ga., Aug. 19, 2009) – Just over \$4.5 million in federal stimulus and state funds is headed to Gwinnett after commissioners voted to accept five different grants on Tuesday.

Almost \$3.3 million is designated for energy audits, weatherization and appliance repairs to make an estimated 461 homes of elderly, low income and handicapped residents more efficient and affordable. The stimulus funds will come from the U.S. Department of Energy through the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority and the work will be done by the non-profit organization Partnership for Community Action.

Another \$1.1 million will help build a new Senior Services Center at 567 Swanson Drive in Lawrenceville. A year of construction will begin this month on the new “green building” that will centralize various programs that serve Gwinnett seniors. Deputy Secretary Ron Sims of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development came to Gwinnett on July 22 to announce the Community Development Block Grant award. Neither of these grants requires matching funds.

Commissioners also accepted a \$69,411 grant to provide home-delivered and congregate meals to frail and homebound seniors provided through the Atlanta Regional Commission. The grant requires a 15 percent local match that the County is unable to provide, but the non-profit Friends of Gwinnett County Seniors group has offered to supply the needed \$12,248. Friends President Pam Tokarz said, “We don’t want to lose any opportunity to feed needy seniors in our community, so we’re happy to provide these matching funds.” Gwinnett provides more than 135,000 such meals annually but still has a wait list of more than 200 eligible seniors.

Fire and Emergency Services will receive two state grants through the Georgia Emergency Management Agency. A grant of \$61,430 will pay for new hazardous materials suits and reference books for the Lawrenceville-based HazMat team that handles incidents like natural gas line breaks, significant gasoline spills, victim retrieval, site decontamination and contaminated victim transport.

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Another \$25,000 state grant will pay to replace equipment on the department's Buford-based Search and Rescue truck. Fire personnel use the equipment to extricate victims from traffic collisions, caved-in trenches, confined spaces, machinery entanglements, or collapsed structures using precision cutting, spreading, disassembly, rigging or heavy lifting techniques.

Board Chairman Charles Bannister said, "We're grateful for all these stimulus funds and state grants, especially at a time when we're cutting our expenses to the bone. This money will allow us to continue meeting the needs of seniors and families in our community as well as helping keep our fire department well-equipped for emergencies."

Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) earlier this year to jump start the national economy after the recession hit last fall.

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