

# State of the County



## Local Economy and Finances

- Gwinnett's population is 805,321 (2010 Census), 65<sup>th</sup> largest U.S. county by population and larger than four states
- Gwinnett had 296,615 jobs in 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2010
- Unemployment rate was 8.9 percent, compared to 9.8 statewide (March 2011)
- County government employees per 1,000 population: 6.0 (down from 6.2 in 2007)

## Excellent Credit History

- Gwinnett has maintained AAA credit ratings with Fitch Ratings, Moody's Investor Services, and Standard and Poor's since 1997
- Only 36 counties nationwide can boast of triple AAA ratings
- Excellent credit results in significant interest savings on bond debt

## Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST)

- Current program began April 2009, expires March 2014, and is likely to raise more than \$700 million over five years
- Gwinnett's 15 cities will share more than \$100 million (estimated)
- County proceeds are designated for transportation, public safety, park, library, and court-house expansion projects

## 2011 Budget

- \$1.3 billion budget
- \$977.5 million Operating Budget (down 3 percent from 2009)
- \$337.3 million Capital Budget (down 39 percent from 2009)
- Budget highlights: designed to preserve core services; no new services; funds required activities; continues programs that reduce costs and streamline operations
- Cost reduction, revenue enhancements, service prioritization, and efficiency improvements have continued into 2011 to meet challenges created by the economic downturn and subsequent reduction in property tax digest
- Engage Gwinnett citizens review committee update: 65 recommendations have been completed and 40 are currently being acted upon or studied



## Planning, Economic Development, and Revitalization

- Four Community Improvement Districts (CID) are now operating to help revitalize targeted areas: Gwinnett Place, Evermore (Highway 78), Gwinnett Village, and Lilburn
- Gwinnett also offers five Tax Allocation Districts (TAD), Opportunity Zone tax advantages for creating jobs, and Recovery Zone bond financing
- *Partnership Gwinnett* helped recruit or create more than 9,200 jobs and 200 business expansions or relocations since 2007
- Received strategic infrastructure planning unit from Water Resources
- Computerized forms and reporting processes for greater efficiency
- Updated zoning and development regulations
- Improved revenue collection
- Project underway to update, streamline, and combine existing zoning code and development regulations into one document, the *Unified Development Ordinance*, which will formalize the community's vision for future development as captured in the *2030 Unified Plan*

## Community Services

- Opened new Senior Services Center built mainly with federal stimulus funding, SPLOST-funded Hamilton Mill Library (15<sup>th</sup> branch), and 12-acre Freeman's Mill Park with restored historic gristmill
- New parks and park improvements: Ivy Creek Greenway and Bryson Park (new construction underway), Harbins Park and Rabbit Hill Park (design underway for new portions), Rhodes Jordan Park (renovations underway), and Lions Club Park (design for renovations underway)
- Leveraged volunteer and financial assistance:
  - o Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center received more \$1 million in grants, sponsorships, and exhibits
  - o Volunteers donated more than 283,065 hours of work
- Participation: 45,595 in youth sports, 7,613 in adult sports, and 522,322 at aquatic centers including 32,752 seniors in water exercise programs and 2,250 in swim lessons
- Served 163,186 meals through senior centers or Meals on Wheels deliveries
- Expanded health and wellness outreach with volunteer health professionals and corporate partner sponsors
- Nearly 200,000 residents served by Cooperative Extension Service
- 2010 General Election had highest voter turnout for governor's race since 1994 (52.86 percent)



## Public Safety

- Nationally accredited police and corrections departments
- Opened new SPLOST-funded Fire Stations 18, 29, and 30
- Hired and trained 50 firefighters and 65 police officers
- Trained and certified 47 paramedics
- Opened new SPLOST-funded police annex headquarters with E-911 Communications and Emergency Operations Centers
- 911 Center answered 457,606 calls (372,548 non-emergency)
- Citizens Fire Academy Alumni donated 2,400 volunteer hours
- Fire and Emergency Services started *Safe Kids Gwinnett* program
- Quality of Life unit received five sworn officers and five code enforcement officers and moved to One Justice Square
- Homicide, robbery, assault, burglary, and motor vehicle theft all declined
- Seized \$53.8 million in illegal drugs and \$2.2 million counterfeit goods
- Acquired new bomb disposal truck with grants and other funds
- Corrections department provided 110,000 hours of offender labor worth \$1.2 million, to County departments, cities, and community improvement districts

## Water Resources

- Opened new pipeline that can return up to 40 million gallons per day of treated wastewater to Lake Lanier
- Opened No Business Creek wastewater tunnel, economizing pumping and treatment
- Upgraded Yellow River Water Reclamation Facility will consolidate six older, less-efficient treatment plants
- Began upgrading Crooked Creek treatment plant to increase capacity and lower operating costs
- Efficiency improvements produced \$10.5 million in ongoing cost savings
- Decommissioned and demolished several old water storage tanks

## Green Government

- *Bronze Certification* from ARC Green Communities Program
- Green Government/Green Communities strategy: *Lights Out*, *Power Down* program, *Energy Star* partnership, and green fleet and anti-idling policy
- Energy efficiency retrofits funded by conservation block grant underway
- Hamilton Mill Library awarded LEED Gold certification
- New gas-to-energy project soon will make electricity from waste methane gas at the F.Wayne Hill treatment plant
- Toilet rebate program has replaced 7,000 inefficient toilets
- Implemented residential solid waste plan, increasing curbside recycling opportunities five-fold and reducing truck traffic in neighborhoods



## General Government

- Converted accident reports and Recorder's Court citations to electronic files
- Opened backup data center and brought systems security in-house
- Replacing aging telephone systems with voice-over IP
- Began hosting County website and intranet in-house, saving \$120,000 annually
- Upgraded technology infrastructure to allow more process automation and employee collaboration
- Added 2010 Census data to Geographic Information System (GIS)
- E-bay used vehicle and other surplus sales generated \$1.1 million
- Providing electronic W-2 tax forms to save printing/mailing costs
- Saved \$1.5 million in healthcare costs through consolidation of healthcare providers and plan changes
- Launched e-mail newsletters to communicate with residents and business owners – sign up today at [www.gwinnettcounty.com](http://www.gwinnettcounty.com)

## Transportation

- Opened half of the Sugarloaf Parkway extension and started building the remainder
- Added 35 cameras and 70 signals to Automated Traffic Management System
- Launched *GC Smart Commute*: live streaming video of major transportation corridors on County website and TVgwinnett
- Completed 32 road improvement projects (175 in last five years)
- Expended over \$100 million (primarily through SPLOST funding) on transportation projects
- Completed 12 "Quick Fix" projects and resurfaced 90 road miles
- Completed mid-life overhaul of 28 local Gwinnett Transit buses
- Continued construction of McGinnis Ferry Road extension over I-85 and State Route 324 bridge over I-85 plus three other major projects with federal stimulus funding
- Started acquiring right-of-way for final leg of State Route 20 widening to Forsyth County line
- 45 projects funded through 2009 SPLOST are in design phase



## Award-Winning Government

- *2010 Achievement Awards* for Floodplain Management Program and Financial Services Continuous Improvement Program from the National Association of Counties
- *Governor's Valor Award* to Gwinnett Firefighter Scott Robertson
- *Meritorious Award and Flagship Agency* status to Police Department from CALEA accreditation organization
- *2010 State Agency of the Year* to Parks and Recreation from Georgia Recreation and Park Association
- *Stormwater Program of the Year* and *Best Large Water Distribution System* from the Georgia Association of Water Professionals
- *Excellence in Floodplain Management* from the Georgia Association of Floodplain Management Programs
- *Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting and Distinguished Budget Presentation Award* from the Government Finance Officer's Association
- *Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award* from National Purchasing Institute
- *Best in Gwinnett* awards from *Gwinnett Magazine* readers for *Best Facilities Maintenance* (Gwinnett County Parks) and *Best Place for a Wedding* (Gwinnett Historic Courthouse)
- *Outstanding Planning Document* for 2030 Unified Plan from the Georgia Planning Association
- *Award of Excellence* from Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc., and National AIA Academy of Architecture for Justice Facilities Award from American Institute of Architects to Police Headquarters Annex and E-911 Center
- *New Landmark Library* for 2011 to Hamilton Mill Library from *Library Journal*