2010 Cobb County Annual Report

From the Chairman

Tim Lee
Cobb Commission Chairman

The past year proved to be one of many challenges for our residents, business community and county government. The duration and extent of the nation's economic recession has surprised even experts and the effects can be felt throughout every walk of life. The good news is that Cobb's responsible planning and fiscal controls have enabled us to operate with a balanced budget throughout 2010 and our adopted 2011 budget remains balanced.

Thanks to the cooperation, insight and knowledge of Cobb's elected officials and county employees, we have reduced our overall staffing and expenses while minimizing cuts to service.

Projects from the voter-approved 2005 Special Local Option Sales Tax continue to come in on budget and on time. Highlights include the expansion and renovation of the county jail, which was completed in April. The construction added more than 320,000 square feet to the complex, including a new visitor's center, administrative building and housing tower. Another important project funded through SPLOST is the new courthouse complex, which will eventually combine all of the county's court services on one campus. The building, which opened in December, provides state-of-the-art security and a larger jury assembly room. Cobb's Department of Transportation completed the fifth year of the six-year Transportation Improvement Program approved as part of the 2005 SPLOST. CDOT started construction on more than 85 percent and completed construction on more than 70 percent of the 310 total projects in the program. The county remains focused on completing SPLOST projects on time and within budget.

We must, and will, remain focused on the financial challenges ahead. I am confident through smart budgeting, increased efficiency and support from you, we will continue our tradition of providing the best place for families and businesses to thrive and prosper.

District Commissioners

Helen Goreham
District One Commissioner

During difficult economic times, Cobb continues to tighten its belt and diligently steward the budget while finding ways to make dollars stretch further. This year, we saw improvements in quality of life, such as the county jail expansion and new superior courthouse. Both of these projects were paid for completely with Special Local Option Sales Tax funds. Planning and construction has also begun on the new Senior Wellness Center, which will be the first of its caliber in the region. The project is being approached in phases and phase one has been approved. Phase one includes the lobby, weight room, café, teaching kitchen, fitness art studio, Meals on Wheels kitchen, classrooms, conference room and offices. The core of Cobb's success has always been our neighborhoods and residents' willingness to do their parts to make Cobb better. These partnerships are essential and I am always appreciative of the community's support and ideas. A great example of partnership is the new volunteer program at the animal shelter. Another group, Friends of Leone Price Park, is forming and will help with improvements to the park. The days to come are bright as we continue to work together toward our shared future.

Bob Ott
District Two Commissioner

This year, we have focused on creating greater efficiencies and working with the public as we strive to analyze and maximize the cost-benefit of services. After hearing from residents how much you value our government services centers, the board was able to find funding to keep them open. The new East Cobb Library opened in 2010 and has been a huge success, spurring development in its retail center. The Johnson Ferry Road Urban Design Plan is focusing on improving land use, transportation and aesthetics while maintaining the area's unique character. The Powers Ferry Road Master Plan was also approved by the board this year and outlines the framework for growth and quality-of-life improvements. Efforts to help small businesses create jobs were enhanced in December when the Georgia Department of Community Affairs designated the Atlanta Road area near Dobbins Air Reserve Base as an Opportunity Zone. Business owners in this area that create two or more jobs are eligible for state tax credits. I recognize the importance of open communication with the public, and am looking forward to working with the citizens oversight committee that will review county functions. We have a tough budget ahead, but we can all continue to work together toward a brighter future.

Thea Powell
District Three Commissioner

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as interim commissioner for District Three. When I initially served the district in the late 1980s, Cobb was experiencing a period of phenomenal growth and development. With that came challenges of a different nature than those we faced in 2010. Cobb continues to support public safety as a top priority by not only maintaining, but increasing, personnel in the police and fire departments. As a result of the retirement incentive offered this year to trim the budget, there was attrition in the county's overall workforce. Despite this, county employees continue to provide a high level of service to our residents. In many instances, employees have taken on additional responsibilities to ensure timely responses to inquiries and concerns. These thrifty measures are the first steps in a process that must encompass a thorough review of the way the county approaches its budget, priority setting and criteria for determining the best use of available funds. A resolution passed in December sets the foundation for this course of action. In the first chapter of "A Tale of Two Cities," Charles Dickens writes: "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." Cobb County has the opportunity to turn the corner toward "the best of times."

Woody Thompson
District Four Commissioner

Throughout this year, we began to lay the foundation of what will become the renaissance of District Four. Art and culture are important tools in the revitalization process and residents provided invaluable input to support the area's future as a vital arts community. We continued implementing community-based change in the Six Flags Drive area with the development of the Western Gateway Vision Plan. The Mableton area form-based code was developed and represents guidelines that will bring to fruition the vision set by the community during public meetings. Development patterns will be compact, walkable and mixed-use. Once this framework is in place, the ground will be ripe to grow new businesses. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs recently designated part of the district along Discovery Boulevard as an Opportunity Zone and business owners in the area who create jobs will receive state tax credits. This incentive will help the county's ongoing efforts to support local businesses, while bringing employment opportunities to residents. During the Create Mableton Workshop in June, Mableton Elementary School's technologically-advanced concept was developed and will introduce a brand new school design prototype. South Cobb Library continues to be one of the most utilized libraries in the county as patrons take advantage of everything the library has to offer. We are committed to excellence, and I am excited about the rejuvenation on the horizon for District Four.

From the County Manager

David Hankerson
County Manager

With the economic recession hitting its fourth year and county revenues shrinking, county employees are focused on budget cuts and finding ways to do more with less. This past year each department's budget was examined line by line to finds ways to save. Our goal is to know exactly how each dollar is being utilized and to limit all spending.

This year, we reduced our county staff by 236 employees through a retirement incentive. The savings from this voluntary workforce reduction will continue to make an impact for years to come. We also implemented a three-year hiring freeze and changes to the pension and healthcare plans to help keep the county's budget balanced.

I cannot praise and thank our county employees enough for putting in the extra time and effort to ensure we still offer the best services to our residents. Employees have nobly rose to the daunting task of doing more with less resources, and have met this challenge with ingenuity and resolve. Our workforce is a vital stakeholder in Cobb that works diligently to find resourceful solutions and weed out inefficiencies.

I often hear from residents about the above and beyond customer service they received from county workers. It is an honor to recognize some of our hard workers with Cobb's quarterly Employee Customer Service Awards.

Despite the valiant efforts of our employees in 2010, we face greater challenges in 2011 that will require even more of our talented staff. I am confident employees will rise to the task as we continue to find new ways to improve the quality of life in Cobb, while living within our means.

Economy

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided funds for new community-oriented programs such as the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program and Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program.

Using Neighborhood Stabilization Program funding, Cobb County has acquired about 44 abandoned and foreclosed single-family homes in areas of greatest need. Thirty-four of these homes were renovated and sold to income eligible buyers. This program has proved instrumental in providing workforce housing for individuals and families seeking to become first-time homeowners.

Cobb was once again provided independent evidence of its fiscal strength. For the 14th consecutive year, the county earned AAA ratings for its general obligation bonds from the nation's three major rating agencies, Standard and Poor's, Fitch Ratings and Moody's Investment Service. Cobb is among the top 1 percent nationwide with only about 20 counties achieving this prestigious status.

In June, GE Energy held a groundbreaking ceremony for its new Center of Excellence for SMART Grid Technology. When finished, this facility will represent a $15 million capital investment in office renovations along with equipment and will employ approximately 400 new engineers and scientists.

TASQ Technology, a provider of point-of-sale equipment, announced in March that it plans to close its two facilities in California and relocate to a 266,000 square foot building on Canton Road in Marietta. This relocation will result in the creation of 350 new jobs.

CCH Small Business Services announced it will open a new headquarters facility in Kennesaw. The company provides tax and accounting software, research and training to more than 45,000 small firms throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. The first employees moved to the new facility this summer and the complete transition will be done by 2012.

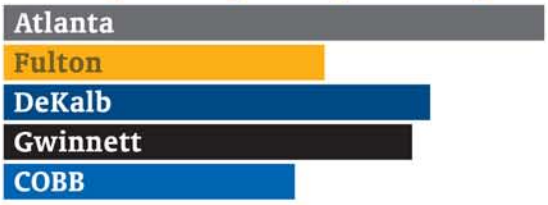
Metro Atlanta Millage Comparisons

KEY	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
Atlanta	20.91	19.20	19.08	22.20	22.47
Fulton	11.47	10.28	10.28	10.28	10.28
DeKalb	16.07	16.07	16.07	16.86	16.86
Gwinnett	11.30	11.08	10.97	13.25	13.25
COBB	9.60	9.60	9.60	9.60	9.60

Figures are without school & state taxes (based on Fiscal Year)

In March, nine of Cobb's education, business and government leaders traveled to the county's sister city, Seongdong-Gu, a province of Seoul in the Republic of Korea. The delegation met with city government leaders and toured Korean companies, the Korean War Memorial and schools and universities.

Total Operating & Capital Budgets



City of Atlanta	$ 1,535,957,653*
Fulton County	$ 905,588,984
DeKalb County	$ 1,231,401,654
Gwinnett County	$ 1,162,456,762
COBB COUNTY	$ 828,015,612*

*Cobb and Atlanta figures = FY 11, other jurisdictions = FY 10

Two areas in Cobb County (along Atlanta Road near Dobbins Air Reserve Base and in the south Cobb area along Discovery Boulevard and its intersection with Mableton Parkway) were designated Opportunity Zones by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Businesses in these areas that create a minimum of two jobs are eligible for a $3,500 job tax credit per job, 100 percent of which can be used against their state income tax liability and withholding.

The county, through its participation in the Marietta-Cobb New Market Fund Inc. with the City of Marietta and the Marietta Housing Authority, has been designated as a Community Development Entity by the U.S. Department of Treasury. This new designation will allow the MCNFI to assist with the economic expansion and redevelopment of eligible areas throughout Cobb and the city of Marietta.

The Cobb County Board of Commissioners supported the issuance of Recovery Zone bonds made available through the federal government's Build America Bonds programs. Recovery Zone Facility bonds are tax-exempt bonds that can be used for most private-use property to help revitalize areas with significant poverty, unemployment or high rates of foreclosed homes.

During 2010, the Community Development Agency led a coalition of county staff in designing three major regulatory and policy initiatives: Create Mableton, the Powers Ferry Redevelopment Overlay District and the Johnson Ferry Road Urban Design Plan. Each initiative improves quality of life, encourages private market investment and produces efficiency in land use and transportation planning to ensure Cobb grows in a sustainable manner.

Create Mableton was a large-scale effort to develop Cobb's first form-based code — a new type of zoning regulation that focuses more attention on physical form of public and private investments rather than separation of uses.

During June, Cobb County, the Atlanta Regional Commission and Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company worked with the community and more than 20 stakeholder interests to set vision during the Create Mableton Workshop, a seven-day intensive public involvement and design process.

This set the framework for the rebirth of the Mableton community known as the Illustrative Master Plan. The draft Mableton form-based code will be presented to the Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners for consideration as part of the code amendment process in January and February 2011.

Full-time Government Employees

*Cobb County figures = FY 11, other jurisdictions = FY 10

The Powers Ferry Redevelopment Overlay District is an effort to create regulations that will encourage redevelopment in some underinvested areas along Powers Ferry and Delk Roads in southeastern Cobb. Staff is working with the community, local area businesses, the Cumberland Community Improvement District and development interests to establish a new zoning overlay district that will enable quality redevelopment while providing valuable incentives to encourage investment in this area of the county. The draft code will be prepared for public review in early summer 2011 with Board of Commissioner consideration during 2012 code amendments.

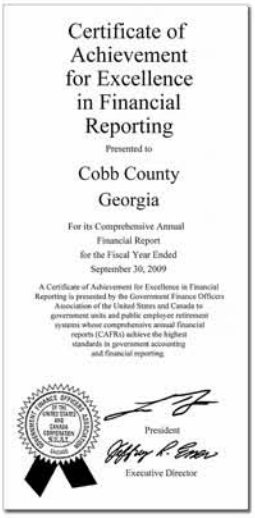
In February 2010, the Board of Commissioner authorized Community Development to develop the Johnson Ferry Urban Design Plan as a result of growing concerns for this major commercial and residential corridor. In the short term, the study will set design guidelines that help ensure quality investments in the corridor that build quality-of-life and provide a distinct "brand identity."

During the long term, the study will investigate various retrofits and possibilities that enable this corridor to transition to a place with improved access, curb appeal through new investment and a framework for reducing sprawl by concentrating commercial investments into more defined nodes of activity. A draft document will be presented to the community and Board of Commissioners in February 2011.

Overview of Financial Information

The financial information contained within this document is extracted from the County's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). In order to provide a comprehensive condensed overview, the financial statements are presented in conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). All financial information presented within this section is accompanied by a reference to a location in the CAFR where the information was obtained. Cobb County's component units are not presented within this section.

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has given an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting to Cobb County for its Cobb County, Georgia 2009 Popular Report for fiscal year ended September 30, 2009. The award is a prestigious national honor, recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government popular reports. In order to receive this award, the published report must reflect the program standards of creativity, presentation, understandability and reader appeal.


Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

Presented to

Cobb County
Georgia

For its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2009

A Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting is presented by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada to government units and public employee retirement systems whose comprehensive annual financial reports (CAFRs) achieve the highest standards in government accounting and financial reporting.

President

Executive Director

Where the money comes from...

The major sources of revenues for the County include property taxes, sales taxes, charges for services and grants & contributions.

The total revenues for FY10 were $800,154,947. This is a 0.4% decrease from FY09. The largest decrease in revenues was a $16,425,473, (or a 6.6%) decrease in property tax revenue.

FY10 Total Revenues

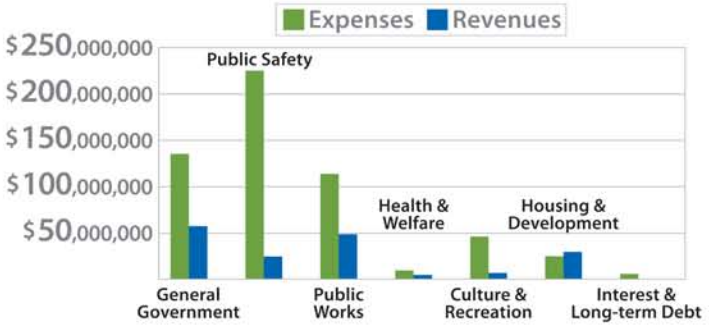
Property Taxes	$ 242,217,484
Sales Taxes	121,143,588
Insurance Premium Tax	22,308,881
Alcoholic Beverage Tax	4,766,808
Hotel/Motel Tax	9,450,045
Real Estate Transfer Tax	735,743
Miscellaneous Taxes	11,846,938
Total Taxes	**$ 412,469,487**
Charges for Services	$ 278,237,033
Operating Grants	33,068,410
Restricted Capital Grants & Contributions	62,467,249
Total Program Revenue	**$ 373,772,692**
Miscellaneous	$ 9,991,036
Grants & Contributions not Restricted	-
Gain on Sale of Capital Assets	1,342,520
Unrestricted Investment Earnings	2,579,212
Total Other Income	**$ 13,912,768**
TOTAL MONEY IN	**$ 800,154,947**

Where the money goes...

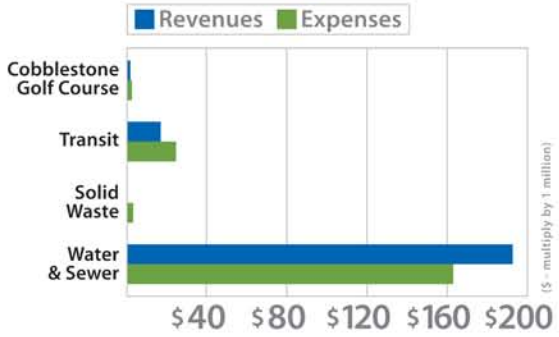
The County's total expenses increased 3% in FY10 over FY09. The two largest program functions in FY10 were Public Safety and General Government. However, the largest increases were in the Public Safety and Housing and Development functions. Public Safety increased $7.1 million and the majority of the increase was in personnel services. The Sheriff's Office added thirty four employees in anticipation of the opening of the new jail. Housing and Development increased $6.1 million as the County purchased thirty-three abandoned and foreclosed homes through the grants provided under the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

General Government	$	135,559,677
Public Safety		226,008,723
Public Works		112,031,838
Health and Welfare		8,288,145
Culture and Recreation		43,049,762
Housing and Development		20,588,418
Interest on Long-term Debt		5,228,323
Total Governmental Operations	**$**	**550,754,886**
Water and Sewer	$	163,448,806
Solid Waste		2,079,765
Transit		24,765,622
Cobblestone Golf Course		1,537,850
Total Business-type Activities	**$**	**191,832,043**
TOTAL MONEY OUT	**$**	**742,586,929**

Expenses & Program Revenues - Governmental Activities



Expenses & Program Revenues - Business Type Activities



The County's "business-type" operations include the Water and Sewer Fund, the Solid Waste Disposal Fund, Transit Fund and the Cobblestone Golf Course Fund. The business-type operations are designed to recover 100% of their costs, including debt payments and depreciation or 100% of their cash flow needs.

How the money is budgeted...

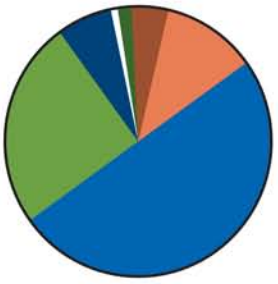
The fiscal year 2010 operating budget which was prepared in the fall and submitted to the Board of Commissioners at the end of fiscal year 2009, totaled $765.4 million. The most significant budgeted fund is the General Fund. The adopted budget for the General Fund was $352.9 million. The Board of Commissioners amended the General Fund budget throughout FY10. The most significant expenditure amendments were decreases to personnel services as vacant positions were eliminated and part-time positions were reduced. In addition, road maintenance contracts were also reduce as more of the work was perform by County employees.

Capital Assets:

Capital assets include property, plant, equipment and infrastructure assets (e.g., roads, bridges, sidewalks, and similar items). Capital assets are defined by the government as assets with an initial, individual cost of more than $5,000 and an estimated useful life in excess of two years. Such assets are recorded at historical cost or estimated historical cost. However the cost of capital assets are not recognized in the year the assets is purchased or constructed, but over the life of the assets as depreciation expense.

Donated capital assets are recorded at estimated fair market value at the date of donation.

FY10 Total Capital Assets Net of Accumulated Depreciation

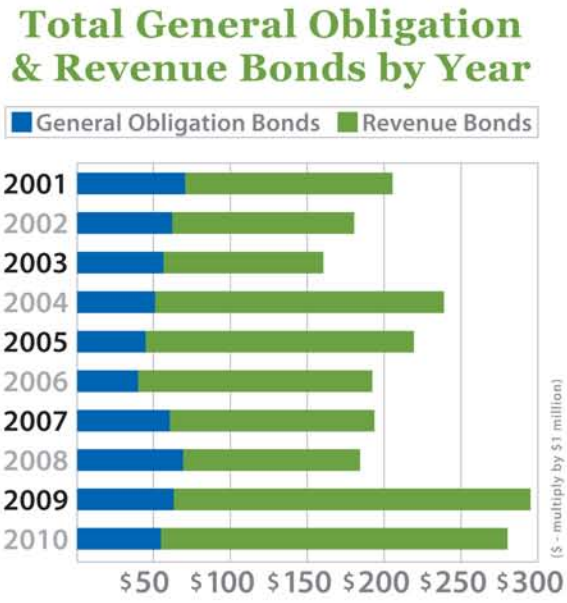


Infrastructure	48.9 %
Land	22.2 %
Sewerage Plants	12.8 %
Construction in Progress	8.0 %
Buildings	6.2 %
Machinery	1.5 %
Improvements	0.4 %

Long-term Debt:

As of September 30, 2010, Cobb County had $278.2 million in outstanding long-term debt, which does not include interest expense. Of this amount, $53.5 million comprises general obligation debt backed by the full faith and credit of the government and $224.7 million in revenue bonds.

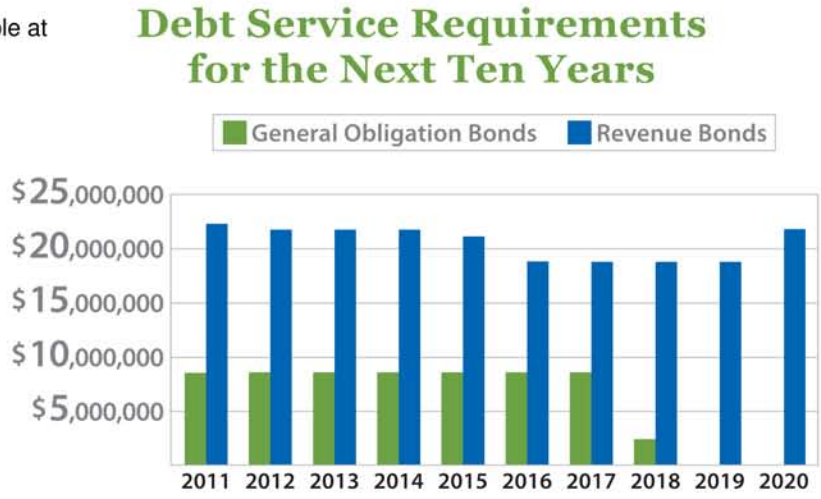
The County retired $18.2 million of outstanding bonds in FY10.



Requests for Information:

For additional financial information or questions concerning any of the information provided in this report, please contact the Director of Finance / Comptroller, 100 Cherokee Street, Suite 400 Marietta, Georgia 30090-9610.

A Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is also available at http://finance.cobbcountyga.gov.



Judicial Services

Cobb dignitaries gathered in December 2010 to officially open the Cobb County Superior Courthouse. This almost $63 million project was completely funded by the Special Local Option Sales Tax. The design is reminiscent of the old courthouse, complete with a clock tower. The 229,000 square foot building contains 11 courtrooms and a seventh floor for future growth.

The Sheriff's Office was actively involved in the planning of the new courthouse. This facility includes state-of-the-art security components and is designed to insure the judicial process occurs in a safe and efficient manner.

Part of the project included extending the inmate video visitation system to the new courthouse, allowing attorneys to conduct video conferences with clients physically located at the jail. This reduces the need to transport inmates to the courthouse, resulting in cost savings and better security.

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With the opening of the new Superior Court building, Juvenile Court will eventually be able to move to the Marietta Square. In 2010, Juvenile Court staff worked with Property Management staff on renovation plans for the old Superior Court building.

The Sheriff's Office is in the process of implementing new computer applications for both record and jail management. These systems will enable better information sharing and improve efficiency.

Cobb County Sheriff's Office remains one of a small number of agencies to apply Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. In September, the Sheriff's Office was also approved to participate in the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Secure Communities Program. This program is technology based and processes fingerprints of individuals booked into jail custody against ICE's fingerprint database. When matching prints are identified, the ICE Federal Support Center is automatically notified and an ICE agent decides whether to place a hold on the inmate.

The Secure Communities Program is another resource that helps the Sheriff's Office accurately identify individuals booked into our facility and improve public safety by keeping dangerous offenders from being released into our community.

The SPLOST funded $110 million expansion of the Cobb Adult Detention Facility was completed in 2010, adding 1,152 inmate beds and a new Visitor's Center and Administrative Building.

The renovation of the jail's old intake area into a mental health housing unit will be completed in early 2011, as well as renovation of original housing units constructed in the 1980s. The expansion increased inmate housing capacity and implemented many technology enhancements that improve both security and efficiency of operations.

Magistrate Court, with assistance from Information Services, completed a project to interface information from electronically-filed civil law suits into the court's case management system. This project has improved accuracy and efficiency, reduced employee work hours, improved response time and increased customer service.

Magistrate Court is currently seeking ways to further improve its customer service and allow residents to pay ordinance violation fines online with a minimal convenience fee, file garnishment cases electronically and expand the availability to file civil suits online to a greater customer base. These improvements will help Magistrate Court staff better manage work flow, increase convenience for residents and reduce traffic and congestion on the Marietta Square, while still best serving customers' needs.

Security-protected court and real estate records are available on the Superior Court Clerk's Web site. Criminal accusation, calendars and real estate records are accessible within two hours.

The Clerk of Superior Court staff is currently working on e-filing of real estate documents and plan to set up public access in summer 2011.

The District Attorney's Office received a portion of the Unified Grant offered to the Cobb Judicial Circuit. The money was used to replace broken, worn out and non-functional furniture in the office, which employees more than 90 prosecutors, investigators, victim advocates and legal administrative/support staff.

Cobb's District Attorney's Office was fortunate to receive funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act this past year. Specifically, the Victim Witness Unit was able to create and hire the following positions and provide other needs for the office. The Victim Advocate positions will be retained with other grant funds while the office seeks funding for the Family and Survivor Advocate position.

• Victim Advocate (part-time): This advocate is assigned to the Domestic Violence/Stalking Unit of the police department to follow-up with victims of domestic violence, stalking and intimate partner sexual assault. This advocate makes timely contact with victims of domestic violence to whom law enforcement has responded to 911 calls for assistance, whether or not the calls resulted in criminal charges being pursued. This advocate works as a liaison between law enforcement, the community domestic violence program and the prosecutors' office in providing comprehensive and support services to victims of domestic violence.

• Family and Survivor Advocate (part-time): This advocate is assigned to work with surviving family members of death cases as a resource and referral liaison and is assigned to work directly with the county Medical Examiners' Office. This advocate acts as a liaison between law enforcement, other community programs including the court and the surviving family members of the deceased. Support services include assistance with victims' compensation claims, crisis counseling, assistance with funeral home arrangements, referrals to counseling and other service providers, assistance and information about probate court and dealing with insurance companies.

• Training Coordinator (part-time): This training coordinator works with the District Attorney's Office, local law enforcement and other community stakeholders to provide training on issues of domestic violence, stalking and intimate partner sexual assault to local law enforcement officers. The grant also supplies money to send local representatives to professional training, which would otherwise not be available due to budget restrictions.

• Victim Advocate (part-time): This advocate is assigned to the Juvenile Division of the Victim Witness Unit and provides notification and support services to victims of juvenile complaints. The advocate helps determine restitution, assist with victim compensation claims, crisis intervention, and education services. Before this position was obtained, there was only one advocate responding to victim needs in Juvenile Court, which has four full-time judges.

• Administrative Specialist (part-time): This support staff position works in the Victim Witness Unit to help incorporate new technology into the unit which allows more efficient, timely written notification services to victims of crime and quicker response times to calls from victims. The new technology enables paperless tracking of victim contacts and other case-related information.

Public Safety

Cobb Safety Village, which opened in 2009, is located on Al Bishop Dr. between Callaway Road and County Services Parkway. The facility, designed primarily to provide safety education for Cobb County's children, had its first full year of operation. During the 2009-2010 school year, the facility helped provide safety instruction to more than 19,000 children, including more than 9,300 2nd graders and more than 9,400 4th graders. This is more than twice the number of children who received safety education previously in the same span of time. The facility includes six classrooms, a theater and an interactive safety house.

The Reserve Police Officer Program was initiated in 2010 for retired Cobb police officers who return to the department in a volunteer capacity. The reserve officers assist with necessary, yet time-consuming, administrative duties. This effectively serves as a force multiplier, by giving full-time officers more time to proactively police and respond to calls for service. The program currently has eight reserve officers and will continue to grow as other officers retire.

Upgrades to the county's Emergency Operation's Center included new audio equipment and technology and a credentialing system for emergency management staff and volunteers. All additions were paid out of the Emergency Management Planning/Performance Partnership Agreement Grant. These additions enable Cobb County to better maintain a superior level of service to residents and coordinate resources and support during a crisis.

Cobb Fire and Emergency Services replaced worn equipment with the purchase of a new $464,889 engine and $442,972 for four rescue units. The department also took delivery of 300 self-contained breathing apparatus with associated equipment at a cost of $1,929,772.

The new Fire Station 30 is located on the new Macland/Windy Hill Connector near the Austell Road intersection, and is only 400 yards from the old station on Austell Road. The $1.5 million project began in January 2009, and construction is projected to be completed in February 2011. This fire station is one story with two drive-through bays, and was built using the architectural drawings of recently built Station 9. The land for the fire station was already owned by the county.

In 2010, an additional 250 Tasers were purchased for the uniform bureau of the Cobb Police Department, bringing the total number of Tasers to more than 350. All sworn officers attended mandatory training. Tasers have been shown to reduce injuries to both officers and suspects. In some instances, the mere presence of the Taser has been an effective deterrent to physical confrontations between officers and suspects.

Cobb's Community Emergency Response Team graduated its 1,000th member this year. A total of 1,157 members have been trained, and the program is recognized as the largest program of its type in Georgia. This year, eight initial training courses and nine skill sustainment courses were offered to these volunteers.

Cobb/Douglas Public Health awarded Cobb Fire and Emergency Services a $32,100 grant to provide Nextel phone service that will help the two agencies communicate during health emergencies.

The new law enforcement records management system implementation project hit a milestone in August 2010, when the application went "live" for many Public Safety units. The application is being rolled out to one precinct each month, until all units are online with the new system and using mobile field reporting.

This past year, Emergency 911 Communications staff selected projects that had a direct impact on the efficiency of emergency communications services but reflected a conservative budgetary agenda.

Animal Control and 911 completed a joint project to purchase a Computer Aided Dispatch work station and license for about $4,000. The workstation provides direct communication between the 911 dispatch center, the Animal Control dispatcher and units in the field using mobile computers. This helped dramatically reduce callers' holding times, repeat calls, complaints and redundant call entries. The CAD connectivity also improves officer safety standards by providing an opportunity to follow up on units as they respond to calls after hours.

The final stage of the 911 center upgrade was purchased and completed in 2010. Each radio position was upgraded from the Gold Elite system, which had reached the end of supportable life, to the MCC7500 radio console. The cost was of this upgrade was approximately $1.9 million. This upgrade enhances compatibility and interoperability with surrounding agencies using the 800 MHz radio system network by allowing for more efficient use of shared radio resources.

During March 2010, more than 80 public safety personnel participated in the Cobb County/Sterigenics Weapon of Mass Destruction Exercise. The full-scale exercise was conducted to improve the overall effectiveness of Cobb's public safety agencies in a simulation of a local disaster event. In addition, the exercise was used as a training tool to introduce the Joint Hazard Assessment Team emergency response plan to police and fire representatives and conduct on-site training in its use.

The Hazmat Team was awarded a $20,620 Georgia Homeland Security Grant for the continuation and enhancement of the fire department's hazardous materials mitigation efforts.

Cobb County completed the upgrade of 13 outdoor weather sirens. Five older model sirens were replaced and eight sirens were upgraded from belt driven to gear driven, which will decrease maintenance costs and increase effectiveness. The total cost was $145,000, including approximately $30,000 from Emergency Management Planning Grants from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency.

In January 2010, the Georgia Search and Rescue Team was awarded a $23,000 Georgia Homeland Security Grant for replacement and repair of equipment to be used for regional emergencies.

In October, the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company awarded Cobb a $13,912 grant for lithium-powered smoke detectors to be given free to the public.

The Cobb Police Athletic League program was established in south Cobb through a collaborative grant with the Center for Family Resources and the Boys and Girls Club. PAL helps prevent juvenile crime and violence by providing civic, athletic, recreational and educational opportunities. Cobb PAL plans to facilitate a track-and-field team as well as football and cheerleading camps in summer 2011.

Recreation

Cobb won first place in the annual Georgia Recreation and Park Association State Lifeguard Competition for the second straight year, attesting to the importance county staff places on safety at its aquatic facilities. The competition tests various lifeguarding skills, including CPR and emergency first aid. Lifeguards from the four county aquatic facilities were on the winning team.

Harrison Tennis Center was honored as 2010 "Member Organization of the Year" by the United States Tennis Association Georgia. This award recognizes the center's outstanding service and selection is made based on service to the tennis community, organization members and the game of tennis. This is the fourth time in the past nine years a Cobb tennis facility has received the award and the third time for Harrison Tennis Center.

The largest annual Special Olympics Winter Games was held in the county with more than 1,500 athletes and 580 coaches competing in six different sports. The games received generous support from the community as 800 scarves were donated and more than 2,000 volunteers were on hand to support the events.

Cobb hosted the USTA National Open for boys and girls ages 16 and younger at Harrison Tennis Center in May. The tournament brought many players from around the country, and their supporters, to Cobb for this five-day event.

The Art Place-Mountain View, Mountain View Arts Alliance and Cobb County Girls Court collaborated on a unique gallery exhibition in 2010. The show encompassed eight weeks of creative writing, visual art and ceramic instruction. Funding for the program was received from two $1,500 grants from the Georgia Council for the Arts and Mountain View Arts Alliance.

Cobb hosted the Amateur Softball Association's 2010 Girls' 18 and Under Gold National Championships. Cobb County was chosen from a list of potential sites throughout the nation and hosted the tournament at Lost Mountain Softball Complex. The tournament featured 64 of America's most elite 18-under girls' fast-pitch softball teams and drew scouts and coaches from more than 75 colleges.

Al Bishop Softball Complex was awarded USSSA Atlantic Coast Division's Special Service Award for parks/complexes. Cobb County had been hosting adult softball teams with USSSA for more than 30 years, longer than any other parks department or complex in the country.

Austell Senior Center was destroyed beyond repair in the September 2009 flood. Cobb Parks and Recreation staff, along with staff from other departments, built a temporary building for the displaced Senior Services program.

The temporary senior center is located on the 137-acre property purchased for the expansion of Violet F. Stout Park, using funding authorized under the 2006 Parks Bond Program.

The department's construction unit adapted the building by adding disability-accessible features such as ramps, restroom facilities and widened doorways. The kitchen was also adapted to facilitate meal service for senior clients. Because county staff was used to modify the facility to a senior center, renovation costs where kept to about $85,000.

The Amateur Softball Association honored Cobb County Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department with its James Farrell Award of Excellence in recognition of Cobb hosting one of the highest-rated national softball championship tournaments in 2009.

Using funding authorized under the 2006 Parks Bond Program, Cobb purchased 42.5 acres of the historic Hyde Farm property in east Cobb, along with two immediately adjacent residential properties.

This year, one of the residential buildings was significantly modified to serve as the Welcome Center for Hyde Farm. Interior rooms were combined to allow larger meeting areas and an extensive deck system was added overlooking the back yard and small lake. The deck also connects to a new restroom building designed to quickly serve large school groups expected to visit the property for future programs at the historic farm.

PRCA and CDOT staff designed access drives and parking areas using environmentally-sensitive ideas similar to those at Callaway Gardens. Staff also installed landscaping at the center. The total modification costs were $302,250.

Services

The new East Cobb Library, located at 4880 Lower Roswell Road, Marietta in the Parkaire Shopping Center, opened in February. The new 16,864 square foot facility was designed and constructed by the county's Property Management department. The library is wired for current and future technology and is equipped with state-of-the-art audio/visual equipment in the multi-purpose room. It has designated areas for adults, teens and children, as well as study rooms, computer stations and reading areas.

The library system went "green" with its redesigned Web page, which provides access to resources available in county libraries. Visitors can easily navigate the Web page to find library materials, hours of service, branch locations, policies and events.

The Friends of the Library raised more than $69,000 from its annual book sales. These proceeds are used to enhance the library system's collection and support literacy programs, such as the annual summer reading program.

The Cobb Library Foundation donated Early Literacy Stations, which are standalone computers designed to help young children learn letters, numbers, places and objects through interactive activities.

The library system, in partnership with Cobb Literacy Council, offered its first GED class at South Cobb Regional Library this year and the inaugural graduation was held in December. Cobb residents now have the opportunity to take classes in the evening at the library.

Seongdong-Gu Library and Cobb Library System exchanged gifts as part of the) Sister City program. Our library system sent books on the history of Cobb, a DVD about Cobb Library System and posters featuring local officials reading their favorite books. Seongdong-Gu Library, in Seoul, South Korea, sent a variety of books on the Korean culture. These books are in Cobb's library's collection.

The Cobb Elder Abuse Task Force was formed this year. Senior Services staff is coordinating the plan to provide safe temporary housing for victims while police and the judicial system take action.

The Senior to Senior Advocacy Team continues to support seniors dealing with consumer issues, Social Security challenges and Medicare Part D registration.

The Cobb County Extension Office presented three green industry updates and two pesticide reviews to more than 300 commercial landscapers. A total of 280 pesticide credits and 90 International Society of Arboriculture credits were given to maintain certifications.

Cobb Extension Office staff trained Master Gardener volunteers made 19,695 contacts with Cobb residents and logged nearly 18,000 volunteer hours with an estimated value of almost $343,000.

Cobb Extension Office staff, in collaboration with Water System staff, taught a hands-on "Sustainable Landscape" workshop.

In total, the Cobb Extension horticulture department made more than 20,000 contacts via phone, office visits, email, fax, demonstration gardens and educational programs. To date more than 22 articles/garden tips, more than 20,000 website hits, 270 television segments and three commercial landscape industry updates provided more avenues to reach the public.

In addition, nearly 2,500 samples (soil, water, plant identification, disease and insects) were brought in for diagnosis on-site or through laboratory analysis. More than 12,000 horticulture publications were distributed. More than 600 of these contacts were from the commercial landscape industry. These contacts emphasized the judicious use of fertilizer, prudent application of pesticides and implementation of integrated pest management to protect and conserve water resources.

Cobb County 4-H has implemented the Empowering Young Entrepreneurs Leadership Academy at South Cobb High School. The EYE Academy is a program designed to invigorate youth as a committed partner in their own development and future success. The 16 weekly meetings target components of a business plan, business skills and life skills, will also providing educational resources that help youth participants match their interests and skills with career choices.

Through these educational resources and hands-on experiences, 4-H'ers can turn potential talents into profitable businesses. This experience will educate them in becoming financially aware and prepared to manage real-world financial issues. 4-H'ers will understand the importance of a high school education as an essential measure in pursuing a post-secondary education and obtaining a satisfying career.

Cobb County Youth Summit Team is a teen leadership program established to focus on county issues at hand. Cobb Youth Summit is comprised of four teen delegates and one adult delegate. This adult-teen partnership enhances programming in the county for community-related issues. Cobb Youth Summit Team began planning and implementing a pedestrian safety program in 2009 and 2010. The program details crosswalk safety, bicycle and helmet safety and the importance of walking or riding on Cobb streets.

Youth Summit team members recruited assistance from adult and teen volunteers to enhance this program and make it a success. Publications in English and Spanish were distributed to county residents through festivals, county events and school functions. Summer programs included teen-led presentations about crosswalk safety to more than 700 elementary students and approximately 400 parents. This project was designed to be interactive, including a large "crosswalk" created from tarp materials to allow students to visualize crosswalk safety rules.

The Cobb County Police Department implemented a new records management system along with a mobile field reporting component this year which will add efficiency to both police and court system operations.

Cobb County Water enhanced the ease of use of its Web site and provided the opportunity for residents to sign up for eStatements (an email notification) which is a paperless option for the monthly statement.

New interface created to enhance connectivity between the Cobb County Geographic Information System and Cobb's address repository system. The new interface will promote Cobb County address standards in the GIS system.

The application supporting the receipt of child support payments for the court system was moved to a new application to prevent any loss of functionality or availability.

Geographic Information System staff developed a Flex Web Mapping that shows the Department Of Transportation's road closures, allowing the public to view the county's road closure map.

An upgrade to the employee time-keeping system, Kronos, was completed providing additional reporting capabilities, as well as maintaining technical currency and support.

A joint effort of Human Resources, Payroll, and Information Services launched the cost-saving project of emailing payroll information (check advices) to county employees. The amount of personnel time and paper will be greatly reduced as more employees participate in the program.

We have enhanced Magistrate Court's warrants on the Web system to allow the public easier access to Warrant information along with additional imaged documents in a more secure environment.

Cobb County Transit is seeking an Automated Vehicle Locator system to improve timeliness and tracking of bus routes. With input from Information Services, they began to solicit for the services.

Information Services installed a new system, BOSS which is an integrated service desk system that provides reporting, unattended application deployments, and asset inventory tracking for hardware and software for the county's more than 4,000 computers.

Information Services continues to implement the imaging software OnBase in the courts system, Human Resources, Payroll and Finance Departments that will help streamline Cobb County's management of records and documents making records more accessible to both internal and external customers.

There was a software upgrade of the fire records management software Computer Aided Dispatch Monitor application. This new application comes with enhancements welcomed by Information Services and Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services.

Geographic Information System staff developed GIS Flex Web Mapping layer which reflects Cobb County School Attendance Zones for all properties within the County.

In the Police Department, laptops were upgraded to allow for quicker response times and less down time.

We enhanced the eFile process in Magistrate Court to eliminate manual data, thereby entry preventing potential errors and adding efficiency to the office.

In the Tax Commissioner's office, a Web site page was created to accept delinquent payments online which included up-to-date information about fees due to the County.

As more and more departments rely on Internet services to provide critical functionality in the county, the Information Department expanded bandwidth to accommodate the growing dependence of county systems.

The application used by both the Tax Assessment and Tax Commissioner was upgraded to keep this critical application up-to-date.

The VOIP communications system was upgraded to ensure that it continued to provide connectivity for both voice and Internet for the whole county.

The Joint Hazard Assessment Team disaster planning information was pushed to an Internal web accessible page so that plans could be more easily updated and published to Public Safety personnel.

Cobb was awarded Stimulus Energy Grant funding of about $6 million and that money is being used on several projects replacing inefficient and old roofs and mechanical equipment.

Community Development moved into the first finished space in Powder Springs Station this year. This move finally combined the agency, which previously had been divided on several floors and buildings, into one efficient space. Customers can now visit one location and complete all their business license, development and inspections, zoning, planning and code enforcement needs.

Property Management is constructing a new space for its office at Powder Springs Station. The move is expected in March 2011.

In 2009, Cobb was one of the first communities to be certified "green" by the Atlanta Regional Commission's Green Communities Program. County staff is continuing this environmentally-friendly standard by integrating green products into maintenance and custodial operations.

The Board of Commissioners awarded a design-build contract to Choate Construction for a new parking deck on the Marietta Square. Construction is on schedule and within budget. The deck is slated to open in spring 2011.

Property Management completed several construction and renovation projects in 2010, including East Cobb Library, many Safety Village structures, the Tag Office, the Sheriff's Millwork and improvements to fire stations.

Cobb's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy guides purchasing decisions to include the merit of positive environmental impacts of buying goods and services from manufacturers and vendors who share a commitment to the environment.

By including environmental considerations in purchasing decisions, along with traditional factors like price, performance and availability, the county will remain fiscally responsible while promoting practices that improve public health and safety, reduce pollution and conserve natural resources.

In April 2010, the Purchasing Department conducted a printing services cost analysis based on the county's black and white and color printing copies, paper, monthly lease, equipment maintenance and labor costs.

As a result of the analysis and based on a change in procedures, county staff decided to outsource printing services, saving about $200,000 per fiscal year.

Cobb was awarded a Department of Energy grant of $580,000 to install 100 auxiliary propane fuel systems in select public safety vehicles. It is conservatively estimated that when all 100 vehicles are running on 85 percent propane and 15 percent gasoline, the county will save more than $120,000 per year. Any gasoline price increase will substantially increase savings in fuel costs by using propane.

Transportation

SPLOST PROJECTS

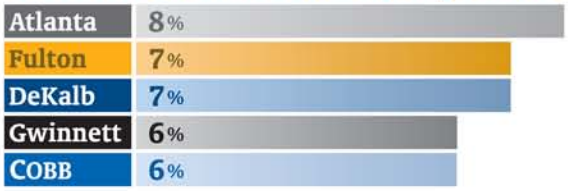
Cobb's Department of Transportation completed the fifth year of the six-year Transportation Improvement Program approved by voters in 2005. During this time, Cobb DOT started construction on more than 85 percent and completed construction on more than 70 percent of the 310 total projects in the program.

This year, 42 projects, valued at about $41 million, were bid for construction.

Construction began on five intersection improvement projects, leaving only four of the original 44 projects left. Construction also began on four thoroughfare and eight roadway safety improvement projects. In addition, 48 streets, or about 32 miles, were resurfaced.

Some of the key 2010 projects from the SPLOST program:

Metro Area Sales Tax Comparison



Big Shanty Road
Phase one of the Big Shanty extension began construction as a part of the federal stimulus package. This four-lane divided road which runs from Busbee Parkway to Barrett Lakes Boulevard will provide a new crossing under Interstate 75 and will provide significant congestion relief to Chastain Road. This phase is scheduled for completion in April 2012. Phase three of the Big Shanty extension, which runs from Chastain Meadows Boulevard to Busbee Parkway, is nearing completion. Construction is scheduled to begin soon on Phase two, which runs from Barrett Lakes Boulevard to Chastain Road.

Jamerson Road/Wigley Road
Currently under construction – with an anticipated completion of summer 2012 – Jamerson/Wigley Road is a safety and operational improvement project consisting of a proposed four-lane divided roadway between Canton Road and Lee Waters Road and a three-lane section (center turn lane) from Lee Waters Road to Sandy Plains Road. Right-turn lanes were added and intersection capacity improved at major intersections. Sidewalks will be constructed on both sides of Jamerson Road from Canton Road to Lee Waters Road, and on the south side of Jamerson/Wigley Road from Lee Waters Road to Sandy Plains Road.

Lower Roswell Road
Lower Roswell Road (east) is a safety and operational improvement project from Davidson Road to Timber Ridge Road and is currently in right-of-way acquisition with construction anticipated to begin in April. The improvements will add 4-foot bike lanes, 8-foot asphalt trail, and 5-foot sidewalks for the entire length of the project. Left turn lanes and right turn lanes are provided where warranted. The intersection of Lower Roswell Road and Timber Ridge Road will be the location of the second roundabout in Cobb County. The construction should last 18 to 24 months.

Transportation Management Center
Cobb County officially opened the Regional Transportation Management Center on County Services Parkway in August. The facility, recognized by Intelligent Transportation Society Georgia as the 2010 "Project of Significance," helps Cobb DOT manage traffic signal systems, assists in monitoring traffic to manage traffic incidents and special events and permits implementation of traveler information systems - all to keep motorists moving smoothly throughout the county. The project was constructed in a little over a year at a total cost of $5.5 million jointly funded with a federal grant matched with County SPLOST funds. It includes a three-story building with 20,000.
square feet of space, and an 8-foot by 16-foot video screen in the control center.

Windy Hill-Macland Road Connector
Construction continues on the Windy Hill Road-Macland Road connector. A portion of the project is complete at the intersection of Austell Road and a new entrance to Milford Elementary School. Improvements will help alleviate traffic on the Powder Springs/Austell Road corridors by adding an additional route for west Cobb commuters to reach U.S. 41 and Interstate 75. The roadway is set to open at the end of August 2011.

SPLOST information is updated monthly and available at cobbcip.org.

TRANSPORTATION

Cobb Community Transit

In January 2010, Cobb Community Transit added one additional local route; Route 35, which provided local service between Wellstar Cobb Hospital and the MARTA Holmes Station via Austell and Veterans Memorial Highway, Floyd Road and Mableton Parkway, Discovery and Lee Industrial Boulevards.

The installation of audio and video camera systems were completed on all CCT buses.

CCT renovated 4,800 square feet of its administrative facility for the new customer service department. This project also included enclosing CCT's bus wash and installing two gas heaters to protect the system piping from winter freeze damage.

The last two parcels of land were purchased for the new CCT paratransit facility. The total cost of the two parcels of land was $2.1 million (funded by federal grants.) The proposed facility is being designed.

Airport

In 2010 the Cobb County Airport-McCollum Field replaced the control tower's aging air traffic control equipment with new state-of-the-art equipment. The control tower is now equipped with the latest technology to provide the best possible services including radar, flight data, weather and automated information services. This project was funded primarily with $241,000 in federal and state grants.

Sample Cobb Property Tax Bill

Homestead Exemptions:
$10,000 County BOC / $10,000 Schools / $2,000 State
Based on residential home with market value of $180,000

County Schools (BOE)	$1,171.80
Maintenance & Operations	$1,171.80
County Government (BOC)	$623.00
General Fund	$422.84
Fire District	$184.32
Debt Service	$15.84
State Government	$17.50
TOTAL	$1,812.30
(BOE) 65%	$1,171.80
(BOC) 34%	$623.00
(State) 1%	$17.50
TOTAL	$1,812.30

Other exemptions include BOC Floating Homestead Exemption & BOE Exemption for homeowners over 62

Planning

Cobb DOT successfully completed a year long effort to develop a Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan which focused on evaluating and identifying needed improvements for the non-motoring public in unincorporated sections of the county. For the first time, Cobb County has comprehensively documented needs and identified strategies for improving bicycling and pedestrian facilities countywide. This documentation will serve as a basis for future planning for pedestrians and bicyclists in Cobb. Additional efforts are underway to coordinate this plan with our local cities and other jurisdictions bordering the county.

Cobb DOT and the City of Atlanta completed a Livable Centers Initiative Study of the Veteran's Memorial corridor at a cost of $150,000. The purpose of the study was to plan and implement strategies that link transportation improvements with land use development strategies to create sustainable, livable communities along a segment of the corridor which traverses both jurisdictions.

Operations

The Smart Corridor project leveraged Cobb County's Adaptive Traffic Control System, which adjusts signal timing in real time for actual traffic conditions, for cross jurisdictional traffic signal coordination. This resulted in adding signals in the Cities of Atlanta and Marietta, and adding transit signal priority, to improve traffic flow and Cobb Community Transit service on U.S. 41, state Route 3, Cobb Parkway and Northside Drive. A collaboration of local and state government agencies, including the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, the Georgia Department of Transportation, the City of Atlanta, the City of Marietta, and Cobb County, completed the Smart Corridor Project in June with great success. The project was planned as a first in the region and intended to be a model to pave the way for future traffic operations improvements on cross jurisdictional major arterial roads in the region. Results of the GRTA before-and-after study show improved traffic operations generating annual savings on the order of $6 million.

Roadway

State Route 120 at state Route 120 Loop Interchange Improvements
This project was let to construction in July 2009 and was funded as a part of the Federal Economic Stimulus package. These improvements will add a loop ramp for westbound vehicles turning to southbound on the Loop (instead of existing left turn). This $7.5 million project is expected to be completed by July.

Roswell Road/ state Route 120 Widening
This project will widen Roswell Road from a five-lane urban roadway to a six-lane median divided roadway between the state route 120 Loop and Bridgegate Drive. Combined with the ongoing improvements at the state Route 120 Loop interchange, this project will improve the capacity and safety of Roswell Road. This project was funded as part of the Federal Economic Stimulus package. Construction is scheduled to be completed in December 2012.

Johnson Ferry Road at Abernathy Road
The Johnson Ferry/Abernathy Road project is a joint effort between GRTA, GDOT, the City of Sandy Springs and Cobb County. This project will widen Johnson Ferry from four lanes to six from Columns Drive to Abernathy Road. The bridge at the Cobb and Fulton County line will also be widened. A raised median will be added to Johnson Ferry Road between Riverside Drive and Abernathy Road. Abernathy Road will also be widened from two lanes to four, from Johnson Ferry to Roswell Road. This multi-year design effort was completed late last year. Construction has started on this project and anticipated to continue until June 2012. Cobb County has contributed $1.75 million to this $18.5 million dollar project.

Lost Mountain Road/Mars Hill Road Intersection Improvement Projects
Construction efforts continue for three intersections in this corridor including Lost Mountain Road at Corner Road, Mars Hill Road at Hadaway Road and Mars Hill Road at Mars Hill Church Road. These projects will add turn lanes at all approaches and will result in a significant realignment to improve safety at Mars Hill Church Road. These projects were made possible as part of the Federal Economic Stimulus package. Additional intersection projects along Mars Hill Road (Nichols Road, Due West Road, Burnt Hickory Road, Old Stilesboro Road/County Line Road, Giles Road/Hill Road and the entrance to Durham Middle School/Frey Elementary), funded by SPLOST, began construction early in 2010 with completion expected by May.

Water and Environment

This year work continued on the South Cobb Tunnel project, which involves building a six-mile, 27-foot diameter tunnel located in hard rock with depths ranging from 150 to 400 feet. The project proceeds within budget and about six months ahead of schedule. The pump station shaft lining is 90 percent complete and all easements along the tunnel alignment have been acquired. The county is in the process of purchasing property for one of the intake shafts, which will complete the easement acquisition.

An upgrade of the South Cobb Water Reclamation Facility is also well underway. Work includes the provision of final filters and an additional secondary clarifier, as well as improvements to the control system. The upgrade is on schedule to finish ahead of contract in November 2011.

Work has been done on the Chastain Meadows Regional Detention Facility, a much-needed stormwater management project. This project is designed to lessen the effects of smaller storms on downstream properties along Noonday Creek by reducing channel degradation and flooding frequency. Noonday Creek is located in a highly urbanized watershed in north-central Cobb. The facility is a 600 acre-foot floodwater storage area surrounded by a 28 foot high, 1,100 foot long earthen embankment dam. Construction is scheduled for completion in early 2011.

After the historic flood in September 2009, Cobb Water System staff set the goals of identifying damages and working closely with FEMA staff to provide the appropriate documentation for each project and obtain reimbursement.

Coordinating with the Risk Management department, Cobb's insurance carrier was supplied damage reports for insurable assets at 68 locations in the Cobb Water System. FEMA reimbursed about 75 percent of the countywide insurance deductible.

Staff has worked diligently to secure funding for flood buyouts. Federal funding of 75 percent and state funding of 10 percent has been obtained for 50 homes. Sweetwater Creek's floodplain has also been revised in an effort to qualify more homes destroyed by the flood in the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

The Engineering Division far exceeded this year's goals by inspecting more than 1,950 creek crossings and surveying almost 86,000 linear feet of sewer for leakage or blockage.

The water system's Public Education and Outreach Programs focused on generating awareness of various topics and many tools were used to achieve this goal, including presentations, tours and promotional materials.

Staff also worked with other jurisdictions to provide insight on successfully managing a utility program, including overall watershed stewardship, environmental compliance, water efficiency, stormwater management and flood control measures.

The Watershed Stewardship Program had more than 6,300 participants, more than 3,300 volunteer service hours and almost 2,000 training and programming hours. The Water Efficiency Program reached about 8,300 students with direct education programs.

Cobb County remains a regional leader in the field of water management and in efforts to proactively identify alternatives based on impending water supply issues. This year, strategies were developed to ease the potential impacts of the tri-state water litigation. Cobb staff participated in Apalachicola Chattahoochee Flint stakeholder group meetings, the economic impact study and the advisory group for the governor's Water Contingency Task Force.

Cobb Water System continued to make technological enhancements by implementing the Web-based WinCC SCADA software at Noonday Water Reclamation Facility. This flexible platform is easier to manage and allows more locations to view plant processes. Northwest Water Reclamation Facility's software will be converted in spring 2011.

In an effort to approve convenience for customers, Cobb Water System now offers the option of electronic billing to all customers. The county saves money by reducing printing and mailing charges. Electronic billing also helps preserve natural resources and is consistent with the county's environmentally-friendly efforts.

The incorporation of radio read technology with large commercial meters is being implemented and has produced cost savings and improved safety and efficiency. Previously, reading large commercial meters took six days. Using the new technology, reading can be completed in about 12 hours.

Cobb was honored with the 2010 Georgia Adopt-A-Stream in Action Award for effectively using non-traditional formats to introduce the importance of environmental stewardship and raise awareness about water quality. The award recognized the Water Stewardship Program's Brooke and Branch Puppet Show.

Cobb's Water Quality Lab received Georgia Association of Water Professionals' 2010 Laboratory Quality Assurance Award for a municipal wastewater lab in the greater than 20 MGD category.

Platinum Awards were also received for nine consecutive years of perfect permit compliance at Northwest Water Reclamation Facility and five consecutive years of perfect permit compliance at Noonday Water Reclamation Facility. South Cobb Water Reclamation Facility was honored with a Gold Award for compliance in 2009.

Keep Cobb Beautiful again promoted stewardship of our community through litter prevention, recycling and environmental education. During Electronics Recycling Day events, about 123,000 pounds of electronics were recycled in four hours and during Document Shredding Day events, about 40,000 pounds were shredded and recycled in three hours.

With the single-stream recycling program established in Cobb County government offices, an average of almost 43 tons per month is collected in house for recycling. The program won the 2010 Conserve Georgia Recycling Award, first place in the 2010 Keep Georgia Beautiful and second place in the 2010 Keep America Beautiful Awards Program for Waste Reduction and Recycling for a government agency. The program also received second place in the Outstanding Recycling Program category from the Solid Waste Association of North America, Georgia chapter.

KCB added dry cell battery recycling collection to the county's office waste reduction program in February 2010. In March, the collection program was expanded to all Cobb library branches which now offer free residential battery, rechargeable and single-use, recycling to residents. About 3,340 pounds of batteries have been collected and recycled.

In 2010, KCB began the Medication Disposal Days program, the first of its kind in Georgia. During two events, about 750 vehicles dropped off unwanted medications and medical supplies. This helped divert 3,175 pounds of medical waste from disposal in landfills and the water supply. The program won the 2010 Georgia Recycling Coalition Spirit of Green Award for Most Innovative Program, first place in the 2010 Keep Georgia Beautiful Awards Program for a Nonprofit in Waste Reduction and Recycling, the Most Innovative Program award from Solid Waste Association of North America, Georgia chapter and the 2010 Association County Commissioners of Georgia County of Excellence Award.

KCB was honored with the Keep America Beautiful President's Circle Award, the KAB Awards Program Distinguished Service System Award and second place in the KGB Awards Program System Award. The Cobb Trees School Tree Program earned the 2010 Georgia Urban Forestry Council's Grand Civic Award.