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NEWS RELEASE  
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### **COUNTY GOVERNMENT TO STUDY SERVICE COST**

(Lawrenceville, Ga., Sept. 24, 2008) – Gwinnett County Administrator Jock Connell has announced a comprehensive services review and cost management project that will initially study all County departments except those headed by independently elected officials. This study is being called the Service-Value-Responsibility project.

More than 70 employees on nine evaluation teams are being led by senior management and facilitated by a consultant, David Cowan of Management Systems Consultants. Teams will review departmental budgets and operations and make recommendations by late November on ways to cut costs and improve efficiency. The final 2009 budget will be approved in January. Some recommendations that are not implemented in the 2009 budget year could take effect in subsequent years.

“The current Board wants to provide superior services while keeping taxpayer costs low,” Connell said. “They are in support of this project to find up to \$35 million in ongoing savings by refining core services, increasing revenues, or both.”

Examples of costs to be examined include: non-core services, administrative functions, rates and fees, productivity, facility operations and maintenance, equipment, inventories, supplies, and personnel costs including overtime and benefits.

Gwinnett County has held the line or reduced its county tax rate every year since 1992 for a total reduction of 27 percent and has maintained the highest possible credit ratings. But since 2000, forecasts have projected slower revenue growth and increasing costs. This year’s budget allocated \$32 million in reserve funds to help cover operating costs.

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Starting in 2006, Gwinnett stepped up its economic development efforts, launched a series of internal efficiency studies and kept tight control of budget growth. With rising gas prices this year, Connell announced a fuel conservation program in June and a hiring freeze last month.

Board Chairman Charles Bannister said, "This cost management project improves our financial security and focuses on our core responsibility to invest in high-value activities that boost the local economy and improve Gwinnett residents' quality of life."

Connell said that once the project is underway, offices headed by separately elected officials will be invited to participate. "With more than 70 people involved in nine teams, the first week and a half will be quite busy. Other agencies will be encouraged to join us in this effort very soon" he said.

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