

Gwinnett County Government  
**NEWS RELEASE**

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**WATER USAGE DOWN IN 2008,  
REVENUES ALSO DOWN BUT NOT AS MUCH**

(Lawrenceville, Ga., Jan. 21, 2009) – In response to the drought and continuing water restrictions imposed by the state, Gwinnett residents and businesses cut their water use by 17.2 percent last year, a drop of more than five billion gallons, compared with 2007. But revenues for Gwinnett’s Department of Water Resources were down only 5.4 percent.

Acting Director Lynn Smarr says that’s because they anticipated the reduction and took steps to mitigate its effects. “Our shortfall would have been \$35.5 million, but our staff has improved our collection rates, updated our fee structure, and implemented a summer surcharge that is required by the North Georgia Water Planning District,” said Smarr.

A rate increase that went into effect in January 2008 raised an additional \$11.1 million. Reinstating late fees brought in \$7.4 million while other fees including the summer surcharge, an account activation fee and other billing adjustments made up the rest of a \$24.4 million total of new revenues in 2008. The County received only \$9.4 million development-related revenue in 2008, a drop of 73 percent since 2006.

Recent rains have raised Lake Lanier’s level and, at the County’s urging, the Corps of Engineers has reduced the releases from Buford Dam during the winter months. Smarr points out that more water in the lake benefits North Georgia and improves drought protection for all downstream neighbors.

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