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ENGAGE GWINNETT COMPLETES COMMITTEE SELECTION PROCESS

(Lawrenceville, Ga., Sept. 16, 2009) – Engage Gwinnett Citizens Committee Co-Chairs Mike Levensgood and Bill McCargo announced today the 42 members who will serve on the citizen led committee over the next six months to prepare budget recommendations to be presented to the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners in early spring 2010. Ten of the members were selected from among fellow citizens who attended the first public forum held on Sept. 9 and 30 stakeholder groups each appointed a representative.

“Engage Gwinnett is an opportunity to inform county citizens about how the county budget works, including revenues and mandated expenses, and get their views on how government should prioritize county services and spend tax dollars,” said McCargo. “Our objectives are to serve as a collaborative group targeting both broad-based and specific constituency groups and audiences to offer a means to help citizens understand complex problems and engage those who normally don’t become involved in policy debates. The constituency or stakeholder groups were identified as a ‘broad stroke’ attempt to ensure that the committee was a general reflection of our community. Now that we have the publicly self-selected members, we feel good about beginning our educational and citizen-led public involvement process.”

Part of the mission of Gwinnett County is to “deliver superior services in partnership with our community” and included in its vision is a “commitment to partnering with others in our community who share a dedication to making life better for our citizens.” The Engage Gwinnett process will be an effective tool in accomplishing those objectives.

“We believe that Engage Gwinnett will prove over the next several months to be an impressive piece of democracy,” stated Levensgood. “The community input we gained from the first public forum – what our citizens think about how Engage Gwinnett should go about doing its work and assuring the public that its recommendations are reasonable and fair – was invaluable. To observe citizens groups select their committee representatives was truly inspiring and gave me even more confidence that Gwinnett citizens do have a sense of shared responsibility in planning for the future.”

All plenary committee meetings will be open to the public and will be held at Gwinnett Center. In order to provide Gwinnett residents with the opportunity to follow the process at their own convenience,

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materials and presentations given to the committee will be made available to the public on the web at www.engagegwinnett.com and on TVgwinnett, the County's government access cable channel. The Engage Gwinnett website also features a Facebook link as another way to follow the process.

The general public will have opportunities to provide input online during certain times throughout the process. Engage Gwinnett will also host several more public meetings during the next six months to give the community an opportunity to review preliminary committee findings and offer feedback.

A full report on the first public forum will be available this week online and e-mailed to the citizens who attended the Sept. 9 meeting.

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Attachments: A list of committee members and the plenary meeting schedule are attached.