

Gwinnett County Government

NEWS RELEASE

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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SEEKS PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

(Lawrenceville, Ga., Nov. 13, 2009) – The Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners today announced its intention to raise the property tax rate by 2.28 mills, which includes an increase of 2.06 mills for countywide general purposes, .21 mills for countywide recreation and .01 mills for debt service. This is an 18.4 percent increase over the rollback rate; broken down, it increases by 18.89 percent for countywide general purposes and goes up by 24.22 percent for countywide recreation.

When the total digest of taxable property is prepared, Georgia law requires that a rollback millage rate be computed that will produce the same total revenue on the current year's digest that last year's millage rate would have produced had no reassessments occurred.

The increase in county property tax would restore some of the spending reductions made earlier this year. "We understand the importance of the services provided by our elected and constitutional officials – including the District Attorney and the courts," said County Administrator Glenn Stephens. "The plan will also restore funding in the area of public safety, which is critical to the health and welfare of our residents." Additional appropriations are proposed in the areas of parks and recreation and social service programs. The millage rate increase does not provide any additional resources for the County's internal support functions, which eliminated \$6.8 million from their budgets earlier this year. More importantly, it does not fund the 2030 Unified Plan, which was approved, pursuant to state law, by the Board of Commissioners in February of this year after several years' worth of visioning and work by citizens of Gwinnett County. The plan has as its stated purpose to guide and enhance Gwinnett County's growth, public safety functions, overall quality of life and economic development as we move quickly toward 2030.

The Board of Commissioners has been able to roll back the property tax rate by a total of 3.98 mills over the past 12 years. The rollbacks were made possible in part because the county's rapid growth generated sufficient tax revenues to cover the cost of expanding service needs. In recent years, however, the county's growth rate has begun to slow.

The millage increase to be decided on Dec. 1 applies only to the county government's portion of the property tax bill, which is slightly less than one-third of the total amount of a

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property owner's tax bill. The proposed increase does not affect the remaining portions of Gwinnett tax bills that fund the Gwinnett County Public Schools, state taxes as well as city taxes if you live within one of the county's 15 municipalities that have an ad valorem property tax.

Before the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners may set a final millage rate, Georgia law requires three public hearings to be held to allow the public an opportunity to express their opinions on the increase. All interested citizens are invited to the public hearings on this tax increase that will be held at the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center, 75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville, Ga., on Nov. 23 at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. and on Dec. 1 at 7 p.m. Each of these public hearings will be held during a special called meeting of the Board of Commissioners. The public hearing on Dec. 1 will be followed by a vote.

Details about what would be funded by the proposal – and what would not be funded – are available online at www.gwinnettcounty.com.

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