



COBB COUNTY GOVERNMENT
2 0 0 8 Annual Report



From the Chairman

Sam Olens
Chairman, Board of Commissioners

During hard times, it is important to have someone working on your behalf. Cobb County Government has remained committed to accomplish this through balanced budgets, improving your quality of life and making certain you get more than your money's worth from

your investment in the community.

Just to cite a few examples of our progress on your behalf from the past year, we opened the 33-acre Hubert Park Soccer Complex, the seven-acre Pitner Road Dog Park and broke ground on the Windy Hill-Macland Road connector. We instituted a simple burglar alarm registration program that will help cut down on false alerts and prevent them from wasting police officers' time. We cut the ribbon for Lipson Drive, a \$2 million two-lane road that improves access to Cobb Hospital and relieves traffic congestion in the Austell Road corridor.

I am particularly proud of the recent passage of the \$40 million parks bond, which will be used to purchase property for use as park land and prevent overdevelopment. The 2006 bond has enabled us to preserve more than 300 acres of premium land for the public.

Our past investments continue to prove themselves. The Cobb Performing Arts Centre soared in its first full year of operation and in September was named the Urban Land Institute Atlanta's Project of the Year. It also won the Development of Excellence award even as it continued to draw people from throughout the region.

This is a magnificent community, filled with excellence and promise. It is my job and the job of every member of Cobb County Government to ensure it continues to be the best it possibly can for you and yours.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samuel S. Olens". The signature is fluid and cursive.



District Commissioners



Helen Goreham
Commissioner, District 1

We are continually striving to improve the quality of life available in District 1. It only takes a drive through the area to see our progress – roadway improvements on Stilesboro Road and the first roundabout in Cobb County at Villa Rica and West Sandtown Roads. Some of our progress is dedicated to saving the land we have, such as the wildly

successful parks bond that allowed us to purchase the entire Bullard property and a portion of the Leone Price property. We opened the O. C. Hubert Soccer Complex in Acworth, using donated land on behalf of young athletes. We are in the midst of constructing the Cobb County Safety Village, a project three years in the making that will become a touchstone of practical safety instruction for our children and community. These are just some of the ways we build a path to a better Cobb County.

Helen C. Goreham



Joe L. Thompson
Commissioner, District 2

It has been my honor to serve as a Cobb County commissioner for the past 15 years and I am proud of everything we have been able to accomplish together. I leave office this year having helped the residents of District 2 make it a place to be proud of. The “Platinum Triangle” of the Cumberland Galleria area has

continued to improve even as it attracted eager consumers from throughout metro Atlanta. This past year we saw the first full year of operation for the famous Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre, garnering top-flight entertainment and accolades from the Urban Land Institute Atlanta. We have paved the way for redevelopment along the crucial Atlanta Road corridor and the projects set in motion in these past few years will continue to benefit residents for the foreseeable future.

Joe L. Thompson



Tim Lee
Commissioner, District 3

Cobb County's focus is not only on the future, but helping those who brought us this far. Seniors deserve our assistance with issues that impact their lives, including health care, transportation and housing. In June, the Board of Commissioners approved the Continuing Care Retirement Community zoning designation, which will enable senior residents to

age in place through a range of housing options, including independent living, assisted living and skilled nursing care. I will continue to focus on senior issues along with the ongoing work to improve quality of life for all residents. County government will continue to work with the Canton Road Business Association and homeowners to further reduce traffic delays through out the district. Finally, the parks bond program will continue to help us utilize properties such as Mabry farm on behalf of the public good.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy D. Lee". The signature is written in a cursive style.



Annette Kesting
Commissioner, District 4

I would like to thank the residents of District 4. It is your confidence in me that has allowed me to make a difference in south Cobb County. New recreation facilities, transportation studies and a new \$2.3 million fire station with a mini police station in the Six Flags and Austell area are just a few of the steps we've taken on

behalf of the public. In October, we broke ground on the \$50 million Windy Hill-Macland Road connector. These and other projects would not have been possible without your participation in county government. It is important for our community to continue moving forward and I would encourage you to remain actively involved at all levels. You, too, can make a difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Annette Kesting". The signature is written in a cursive style.

SPLOST Projects

■ Cobb County Department of Transportation's Engineering Division completed the third year of the six-year Transportation Improvement Program approved by voters in 2005. DOT completed 34 percent of the 260 total projects in the program and another 31 percent, valued at \$115 million, are currently under construction.

■ Successes included the \$768,800 West Sandtown-Villa Rica Road intersection improvement. This includes the first roundabout constructed by Cobb County. Roundabouts are proven to significantly reduce the number and severity of accidents at intersections. It will also reduce traffic delays.

■ Construction is scheduled to begin this spring on the new Superior Court building in downtown Marietta and is expected to be complete by November 2010.

■ The 1152-bed expansion of the Cobb County jail facility by the Sheriff's Office, expected to be complete by the end of 2009, continues. The visitor center at the complex is scheduled to open this January and will provide the primary link between the jail and the public – including records, bonding and inmate visitation. Visitation will now

be done through video conferencing. This will increase facility security, decrease costs and make visitation more convenient for the public.

■ The DOT Operations and Engineering Divisions are overseeing the design for a new Traffic Management Center to reduce congestion and help improve traffic flow through remote signal management and corridor monitoring. The facility would include a video wall for simultaneous monitoring of real-time traffic conditions, travel and weather information and making signal timing adjustments – thereby providing the public with accurate and timely information. Construction starts in spring 2009.



■ About 230 roads (77 miles) were resurfaced at a cost of \$12.3 million. Fifteen bridges began construction (totaling \$12.7 million), leaving only seven of the original 34 bridges not yet started. Nine school safety improvements (totaling \$3.9 million) began, leaving only six of the original

26 projects not started.

■ The current traffic signal timing project is 80 percent complete and includes Atlanta Road, Barrett Parkway, Cobb Parkway, Powder

Metro Area Sales Tax Comparison

Atlanta	8%
Fulton	7%
DeKalb	7%
Gwinnett	6%
COBB	6%

Springs Road, Old Highway 41, Richard Sailors Parkway, South Cobb Drive, Wade Green Road and Windy Hill Road. The project will reduce delays, fuel consumption and emissions by moving traffic efficiently.

- The nearly \$50 million Windy Hill-Macland Road connector broke ground in October. These improvements will be significant for the Powder Springs Road/Austell Road corridors by adding an additional route for west Cobb commuters to reach U.S. 41 and Interstate 75.
- Cobb County commissioners cut the ribbon for Lipson Drive, the two-lane road that provides improved access to Cobb Hospital. The \$2 million project, which connects the East-West Connector to Mulkey Road at Austell Road, is expected to relieve traffic congestion.
- SPLOST information is updated monthly and available at cobbcip.org.

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

Governor's Tax Credit -\$228.24

TOTAL \$1,584.06

(BOE) 65% \$1,171.80

(BOC) 34% \$623.00

(State) 1% \$17.50

Governor's Tax Credit -\$228.24

TOTAL \$1,584.06

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

Economy

■ Cobb County continues to enhance its Sister City relationship with the province of Seongdong-Gu in Seoul, Korea. In April, the county hosted a successful visit with a delegation that included elected officials such as the mayor, as well as representatives from their business community and public education system.

■ During the visit, Pope High School in east Cobb and representatives from the Muhak Girls High School in Korea formalized a relationship to promote educational ties between them. Kennesaw State University also agreed to send student teachers to Seongdong-Gu to teach English.

■ In September, a smaller delegation from Cobb County comprised of local Korean-American businessmen, county Economic Development staff, Cobb Chamber staff and representatives from Georgia Power and Cobb EMC travelled to Seongdong-Gu to host business recruitment meetings with companies in the area.

■ The travel services company Travelport GDS announced this year that it will make Cobb County its North American global distribution

systems headquarters, adding up to 300 jobs and investing \$33 million. Travelport GDS will become one of the largest private companies headquartered in Georgia and the Atlanta metro area will retain 325 jobs.

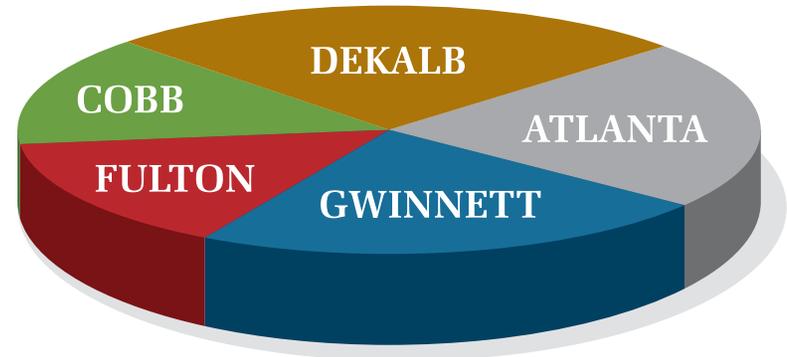
■ The Cobb County Board of Commissioners gave its approval this year for the Girl Scout Council of Northwest Georgia to construct a new Volunteer Services Center and regional headquarters at Camp Timber Ridge in Mableton. The council plans to move its operations to the new center by 2010.

■ The Georgia Department of Economic Development certified Cobb County as “Entrepreneur Friendly,” making it the state’s 84th community with the designation. Qualified entrepreneurs and small business owners in Cobb County are now eligible for customized market data, such as demographic and business information.

■ For the 12th consecutive year, the nation’s top three bond rating agencies reaffirmed Cobb County’s AAA rating on outstanding General Obligation debt. Moody’s, Standard and Poor’s and Fitch Ratings,

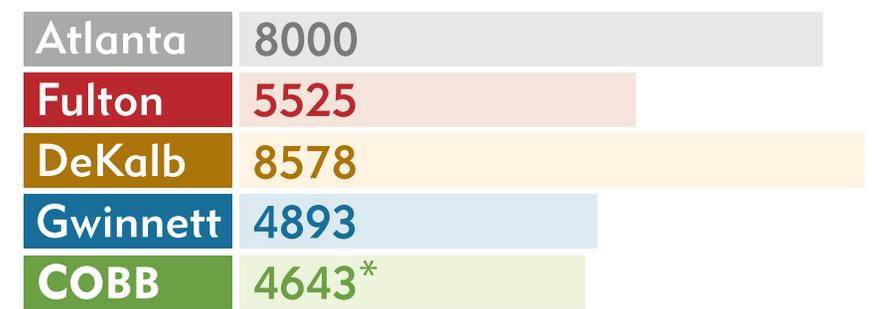


Total Operating & Capital Budgets



	City of Atlanta	\$ 1,393,946,006
	Fulton County	\$ 982,426,807
	DeKalb County	\$ 1,764,583,076
	Gwinnett County	\$ 1,532,240,805
	COBB COUNTY	\$ 858,148,391*

Full-time Government Employees



*Cobb County figures = FY 09, other jurisdictions = FY 08

each reviewed the county's current financial situation in March and determined that its highest ratings were still justified.

- We continue to have the lowest millage rate in metro Atlanta, providing residents with the best service at the least possible cost.
- Cobb County supports its business community. United States Chamber of Commerce awarded the Cobb Chamber of Commerce with a 5-star accreditation for its sound policies, effective organizational procedures and positive community impact – making it the only 5-star chamber in the metro Atlanta area. Of the 6,936 chambers in the nation, only 44 are 5-star accredited.

Total Unincorporated Tax Millages

KEY	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08
Atlanta	21.67	21.22	20.91	19.20	19.08
Fulton	15.63	16.38	16.08	14.15	14.15
DeKalb	15.58	15.48	16.07	16.05	16.07
Gwinnett	11.50	11.47	11.30	11.08	10.98
COBB	9.72	9.60	9.60	9.60	9.60

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

Services

■ Cobb County took the initiative to reduce its water use in county-owned buildings by replacing older restroom fixtures with water-saving devices. Domestic water use in 67 county buildings and facilities through August was reduced 29 percent from the comparable period in 2007. This lowered water use by more than 3 million gallons and saved taxpayers almost \$25,000.

■ Operational changes at the county's jail and detention facilities produced 3.8 million gallons of water savings and more than \$28,000 in billing reduction for the same eight month period. All together, Cobb County Government reduced its water use for the first eight months by more than 7.5 million gallons, resulting in taxpayer savings of more than \$53,000.

■ Bringing Cobb to the forefront of green initiatives, the Board of Commissioners adopted an Environmental Purchasing Policy that supports products and services that are not harmful to human health, are less polluting, minimize waste, maximize the use of biobased or recycled materials, conserve energy and water and reduce the consumption or disposal of hazardous materials. The policy commits to buy environmentally-preferable



goods and services as long as they meet performance needs and are available at a reasonable and competitive cost.

■ Cobb's planned, SPLOST-funded, new Superior Court building is expected to meet criteria necessary to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification. The marginal additional building costs to achieve LEED certification are quickly recovered

in operational and maintenance savings.

■ The county's commercial biodiesel program for its truck and equipment fleet has proven its effectiveness and significantly reduced emission pollutants during its first full year of operation. The county will continue to explore other alternative fuels for its vehicle fleet.

■ "Cobb Freedom" is a new Senior Services program that offers vouchers for transportation.

It is designed for seniors who live in areas that do not have paratransit, even though they are qualified for the program. More than 200 seniors are expected to participate the first year, allowing them to travel independently to their doctor, grocery store, church and other destinations using pre-approved vendors.

■ *Retire in Georgia* magazine announced in 2008 that Cobb County was one of its top ten places to retire in the state. The editorial staff compared criteria such as climate, travel and tourism assets, technology infrastructure, cost of living, healthcare infrastructure, housing, population dynamics, community commitment, state and local parks systems and lifelong learning opportunities when making its decision.

■ The National Association of Counties presented Cobb Senior Services with the 2008 NACo Achievement Award for Health University-Cobb, a free program which provided a variety of educational seminars and motivational workshops emphasizing nutrition and fitness over a 16-month period. More than 500 seniors were tested, of which 398 qualified to enroll based on at least one significant risk factor.

■ To better serve the residents of north and west Cobb County, a branch tag office was placed in the new Fire Station 28 on Kemp Ridge Road. To provide additional staffing and better serve customers in the southern part of the county, the Austell Road branch tag office was moved to a larger facility in the South Cobb Government Service Center.



■ The Cobb County Public Library System held two book sales during the fiscal year, raising \$61,898 with help from volunteers. Proceeds are used to purchase new books, CD's and DVD's for all 17 libraries in the system.

■ Cobb County and the city of Powder Springs cut the ribbon on the jointly funded \$7.1 million Powder Springs Library in January.

The new 10,000 square foot library, located at 4262 Marietta St., includes an expanded collection of library materials, additional public computers, a larger meeting room and a separate children's wing with a programming room.

■ The library system expects to open the newly renovated and expanded Mountain View Regional Library in early 2009. The \$2.4 million expansion project will add 4,000 square feet to the original 16,000 square foot building, increasing the size of the children's department, and creating a young adult area and three new study rooms. More than 60 new parking spaces will be added. The project includes a \$325,000 state construction grant.

Services

- New services include installation of wireless Internet access in all county libraries and self-reservation stations for public computers in the Central, South Cobb Regional and Powder Springs branch libraries.

- A pilot self-checkout station was installed in the Central Library, allowing library users the same convenience offered by many retail establishments. Free audio book and video downloadable MP3 services were added to the library's resources this year.

- Government Access Channel TV23 and its mobile production truck televised 19 different local events this past year, including the Marietta Fourth of July Freedom Parade, East Cobber Parade, Alcohol and Drug Awareness days at local schools, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Boys & Girls Club oratorical competitions.

- Property Management conducted extensive renovations to offices in the main Cobb County building, making Human Resources and other departments more accessible to the public.



- The county began implementing Accela, a comprehensive software application that supports Cobb County Community Development Agency operations – including zoning code enforcement, permit inspections and issuing business licenses and occupational tax certificates. The program allows the agency to interface with multiple entities, provides wireless communication to field personnel and enables the public to access these services through an external

Web site.

- The county generated more than \$90,000 in sales of maps and data from the base map of Cobb showing topography, transportation features and waterways.

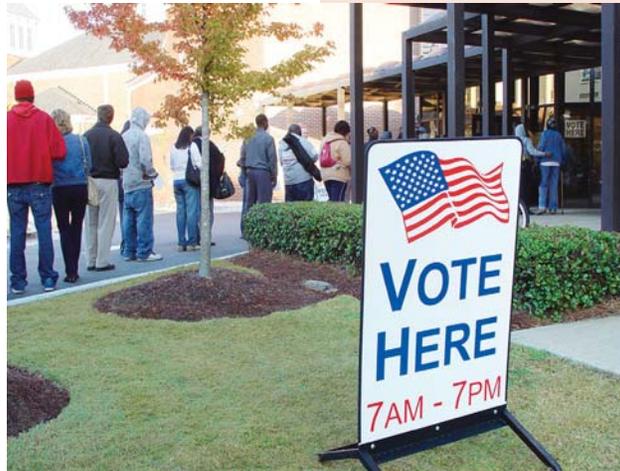
- Information Services upgraded the county document imaging system currently used by the following departments to improve efficiency: Juvenile Court, Magistrate Court, Department of Transportation, Water System, Sheriff's Office and Fire and Emergency Services. It also implemented the document imaging solution for Community Development and integrated it with the Accela project at a cost of \$91,500.

- The county now has a single system where all information related to meeting agenda development is retained and published for public viewing.

- Cobb Solid Waste partnered with Keep Cobb Beautiful and Cobb Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to promote a pilot recycling program at county sports facilities. Residents were encouraged to use bins at five parks throughout Cobb: Wild Horse Creek, Lost Mountain, Al Bishop, Harrison and Terrell Mill to recycle plastic bottles and aluminum cans.

- Extension-trained Master Gardener volunteers made 12,412 contacts with residents and provided 14,724 hours in service with an estimated value of almost \$270,000.

- In collaboration with Cobb County Water System and the Environmental Protection Division, Cobb County Extension administered 275 water certification exams to permit watering of newly installed landscapes. Cobb Extension also conducted three green industry update trainings and two pesticide reviews to more than 300 commercial landscapers.



- With an estimated 3 million visits yearly to the cobbcounty.org main page alone, the county aims to improve its online services. The Communications Department and Information Services joined with IBM to construct a new Web portal to provide even better access to all areas of county government and increase efficiency.

- Keep Cobb Beautiful was honored with both state and national awards for its work. Keep America Beautiful selected the Cobb organization for its 1st place Outstanding National Affiliate award, the 2nd place Waste Reduction award in recognition of the Electronics Recycling Day program and the President's Award. In addition, Keep Georgia Beautiful presented KCB with 1st Place Outstanding Georgia Affiliate, 1st Place Community Improvement-Earth Day in the Park and 1st Place Waste Reduction-Electronics Recycling Day. It also honored the head of KCB with its Director of the Year award.

- Cobb County 4-H conducted hands-on educational programming in 24 Cobb County and Marietta City Schools. The 4-H AgriScience curriculum was taught in 5th grade classes.

Public Safety

■ A program begins Jan.1 that will help reduce one of the most common calls made to the Cobb County Police Department – false alarms. The ordinance, passed by the Board of Commissioners this past year, requires home and business owners to register their alarms and pay fines for multiple false calls. This will enable the police to increase proactive patrolling and reduce fuel consumption. The new False Alarm Unit will be self-supportive and will not use taxpayer funding for operational costs.

■ The Cobb Police Department has continued its successful Police E-Mail Notification System program where homeowners and business owners are advised of crime trends, suspect lookouts and other important information from their local police precincts via e-mail. The PENS program has been expanded into all five Cobb Police precincts.

■ Construction began in February for the \$5 million Cobb County Safety Village on Al Bishop Drive. The village will be developed into the most comprehensive safety training environment in the region where children can gain knowledge through hands-on experiences. The village will con-

tain reduced-scale buildings, lifelike streets with sidewalks and traffic signals on the 3.5 acre site. Personnel from both police and fire will be assigned to teach fire, bus and railroad safety, accident reduction and other preventive measures. For more information, visit cobbcountyga.gov/safetyvillage.

■ The Cobb Police Department was awarded re-accreditation in March by the national Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. The program is designed to improve public safety services by maintaining a body of standards developed by public safety practitioners. This was the department's first re-accreditation since its initial accreditation in 2004.

■ The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies awarded re-accreditation to Cobb County E911 in July. The agency was also recognized as a Flagship agency, one of two communications agencies in the nation to receive the award consecutively. This was the department's second re-accreditation since its initial accreditation in 2002.



■ The Cobb County Emergency Communications / E911 Bureau has allocated \$1.4 million for renovations and improvements to the 911 operations center, including replacement of aging console furniture, carpet and geographic notifications system. Improvements include adding DOT cameras, a large wall monitor for fire dispatch operations and conducting an electrical assessment to address the added electrical needs.

■ Public Safety completed the new \$2.3 million Fire Station 9 and opened it for use in February. A special feature of this facility is that the station also houses a “mini-precinct” for the Cobb County Police Department, providing accessibility for the public living in the Six Flags area and an excellent base of operations for officers. A duty officer is assigned to the precinct 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, to help residents.



■ The \$2.7 million Fire Station 5, located in Vinings on Paces Ferry Road, opened in September. The two-bay, two story structure has a partial basement for a total of about 9,688 square feet and was designed to harmonize with the look of the community.

■ The new \$2.5 million Fire Station 28 on Kemp Ridge Road in the Acworth area opened in November. A satellite Cobb County Tag Office has been incorporated into the building.

■ Cobb County’s outdoor warning system, consisting of 74 sirens, will be upgraded from an analog to a digital system. The \$476,240 upgrades are expected to be complete by February.

■ Cobb County Department of Public Safety procured \$491,000 in grants from the U.S. Department of Justice to purchase microwave equipment to provide interoperable communication between Cobb County and the city of Douglasville. Cobb also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with other metro Atlanta jurisdictions as a joint member in the Urban Area Security Initiative, an interoperable communication project.

■ Cobb Emergency Management Agency created a preparedness program and extended it to metro Atlanta, including business partners, to help inform Cobb residents about the importance of being prepared in case of a natural or manmade disaster. Residents were

Public Safety

encouraged to prepare by participating in a four-month program that involved obtaining emergency supplies and planning.

- All public safety agencies from Cobb County and its cities participated in Active Shooter Training at Campbell High School along with Cobb Emergency Management Agency and other jurisdictions in May.

- A police captain was appointed as commander of Animal Control and placed at the facility for direct management of personnel. A management review also led to upgraded technology and improvements in customer service.

- The Cobb County Police Department, in conjunction with the federal government's surplus equipment program, was able to add a new tactical response vehicle. The Light Armored Vehicle 300 has undergone \$51,000 worth of modifications to prepare it for police duty. The vehicle is equipped with a breaching tool for entry into any building, safety cameras to assist with maneuverability and an infrared camera system to locate



suspects in darkness.

- The Cobb Police Department has added a new facility on Mableton Parkway to house the Quality of Life / Code Enforcement unit and the Violent Incident Prevention and Early Response (VIPER) unit. The building was previously the South Cobb Library and underwent \$100,000 in renovations so it can be used for police purposes.

- The Georgia Emergency Management Agency selected the Cobb County Police Department to receive a \$50,000 infrared camera system to help locate fleeing suspects and search for those lost or in need of medical assistance. The police department bought three smaller and more portable units for \$10,000 each.

- The Cobb County Police Department updated its patrol fleet with the replacement of 41 Ford Crown Victoria police cars. These vehicles were used to replace some of the older police units. The police fleet also added four new Dodge Chargers which are primarily used in the Traffic Services Unit.

- The department continued its \$127,710 updating of Mobile Data Terminals for the patrol fleet with the change-out of 30 in-car computer laptops. It will also continue to upgrade the video cameras with digital technology, continuing the process in Precinct 1 that has been completed in other parts of the county.

- The Cobb Police Department has also joined with other businesses and the Hispanic community to form a Hispanic Business Initiative. This joint effort is a way for the police department to communicate with the Hispanic community and help address their concerns. Monthly meetings are held to show what public services are available and answer any questions or concerns.

- Cobb's Community Emergency Response Team, now with more than 750 members, is recognized as Georgia's largest CERT program. The program trains volunteers to help provide initial aid until public safety personnel can respond to disasters or other emergencies.

- This year, eight initial training courses, 23 ongoing training courses

and seven skills sustainment courses were taught through CERT. A district program was also implemented for members to train together in assigned geographical locations.

- Cobb County, one of 20 Emergency Management Agencies selected nationwide for a federal grant, received \$250,000 to enhance its Emergency Operations Center. Relocating the present

EOC will begin in 2009 and is scheduled for completion in March 2010. The construction will provide additional offices, conference rooms, updated equipment and technology.

- In 2005, \$27 million in SPLOST funds were allocated to help pay for an upgraded public safety radio system for the county and the cities it supports, providing modern mobile data services and enhancing communication with surrounding agencies. The project is near completion with the 800 MHz radio system infrastructure

installed and all radios either installed or ordered.



Judicial Services

- Security enhancements for the 10 E. Park Square building have been completed by the Sheriff's Office as part of an upgrade throughout the Justice Complex. This building houses the District Attorney's and Solicitor General's Offices as well as several other county offices. The upgrades include perimeter screening and closed-captioned television monitoring. Once complete, a consolidated system will deliver state-of-the-art integrated security control for the entire Justice Complex.

- The Cobb County Sheriff's Office remains one of a small number of agencies nationwide to participate in the enforcement of immigration laws. Deputies have identified more than 300 individuals each month facing local criminal charges and who are in the United States illegally. These individuals are released to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody for deportation once local charges are satisfied or a bond posted.

- The Cobb County Superior Court, in conjunction with the Cobb County Bar Association, now offers the "Family Law Workshop" to those representing themselves in family law action. The free class



offers basic information to residents on how to navigate their way through the court system. The workshop also provides information on attorneys who represent clients on a "limited scope" basis which is less expensive than traditional legal representation.

- In October, State Court began a pilot program targeting defendants convicted multiple times for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Cobb County DUI Court is a post-conviction, intensive probation program that combines treatment with individual accountability and judicial oversight. These courts have been shown to reduce recidivism, resulting in taxpayer savings and a safer community.

- Magistrate Court began scheduling mediators to be on site on days when civil court is in session to mediate cases if so desired by a plaintiff and defendant on the assigned court date as opposed to prior to the court date. This new practice requires only one visit to court for the parties to the case, has lessened the court's docket and saved time, cost and effort for everyone involved.

- Magistrate Court, in coordination with Information Services,

is seeking funding to provide residents with the capability to pay ordinance violation fines online to increase convenience to customers and allow Magistrate Court staff to work more efficiently.

- The Magistrate Court Pretrial Division now uses the Superior Court Drug Lab for defendant drug testing, thereby eliminating use of an outside provider. Part-time staff members have been reassigned to Pretrial to assist with administrative duties and improve customer service. Scanning capabilities are now used to save time and effort to access information with the intention of eventually eliminating paper files. In addition, Pretrial has initiated a process to archive photos to ensure positive identification of defendants.

- To provide Cobb residents with accurate and up-to-date information about registered sex offenders, the Sheriff's Office spent its first full year using a Web-based application called OffenderWatch. This provides residents access to a listing of offenders and a means to notify them when a registered sex offender moves within a mile radius of their residence. OffenderWatch is available through cobbsheriff.org.



- The Cobb County Law Library updated its Web site to offer patrons improved forms in conjunction with the Family Law Workshop. The forms are free to download. Patrons can print these forms off of the Web site for 10 cents a page in the Law Library, or can purchase a pre-printed packet from the Law Library at a cost ranging from \$5 to \$15. The proceeds from the sale of these pre-printed packets help fund the Family Law Workshop.

- During the past year, a combined total of 7,019 warrants were processed through the Solicitor General's Office, resulting in 6,084 accusations filed with the State Court Clerk's Office, 251 cases diverted through the Pre-trial Diversion Program and 2,016 domestic violence cases heard in Magistrate Court.

- All Magistrate Court courtrooms were reviewed by officials to ensure safety and maximization of available space. Officials

coordinated the construction of additional courtroom benches so all available space could be utilized in accordance with existing fire code, thereby allowing the court to schedule as many cases as possible and ensure optimal processing times.

Transportation

- Cobb Department of Transportation and the Police Department have initiated a program to improve safety along roads and intersections. Higher than average crash locations will be reviewed by both traffic engineers and law enforcement personnel, then the expertise and resources of both departments will be used to make them safer.

- The Advanced Traffic Management System Phase IV project is substantially complete. The project includes 42 miles of new fiber-optic cable with 15 new closed-circuit television dome cameras. The additional cameras will allow the Traffic Control Center to improve traffic signal coordination and speed response to malfunctioning signals and other incidents.

- The department has upgraded all 525 of the county's traffic signals to the new Advanced Transportation Controller, which allows for cross-jurisdictional signal timing.

- Cobb DOT finished a Long Range Comprehensive Transportation Plan which included a special focus on the impact of Paulding traffic on the county road network and a sub-area study of traffic

conditions in the Oakdale area. The \$1.4 million project, which was approved by the Board of Commissioners in February, promises to guide planning of transportation infrastructure for the next 25 years.

- A \$100,000 Austell Road Access Management Plan was launched to improve access and traffic circulation within the Austell Road Livable Centers Initiative corridor.

- This past year, DOT began implementing recommendations from a senior adult transportation study. Strategies include increasing transportation options not only for seniors, but for all residents, and may include promoting alternatives such as bicycling, walking, carpools, vanpools and other ride share services.

- The Atlanta Road bridge over the Chattahoochee project, which will replace an obsolete two-lane bridge with a modern four-lane bridge and median, a sidewalk on one side and a multi-use trail on the other, is expected to be completed this year. The \$7.3 million



project will remove a substantial traffic bottleneck in this area.

- The \$4.4 million intersection improvements on Austell Road, which will improve safety and efficiency by adding turn lanes, deceleration lanes and other upgrades, has broken ground and is expected to be completed in 2010.

- Intersection improvements at U.S. Highway 41, Cobb Parkway and White Circle will align side streets and add a much-needed signal to improve safety and traffic flow. The project is expected to be finished this year.

- Cobb DOT oversees a database that provides an up-to-date inventory of roads, sidewalks, trails, bus routes and stops. DOT publishes six layers on the county's Geographic Information Systems Web mapping site, giving the public easy access. New layers for this year include traffic cameras, existing sidewalks and SPLOST project status.

- In fiscal year 2008, Cobb County Transit riders took nearly 4.9 million trips – an all-time record ridership. CCT also converted



to the Breeze Fare collection system. By converting to the Breeze system passengers are able to easily transfer between CCT and MARTA.

- Construction broke ground in September for the new Acworth Park and Ride lot. This \$2.2 million contract will expand parking from 274 to 496 spaces, improve safety with additional lighting and provide a new passenger waiting area.

- The Mableton Park and Ride Lot has also broken ground. Located adjacent to the existing Mable House Amphitheatre, this phase costing approximately \$300,000 includes a 118-space surface parking lot and landscape islands.

- In 2008 the airport rehabilitated and widened its only runway to a standard 100 feet width, expanded the remaining safety areas on the side of the runway to Federal Aviation Administration standards and installed high intensity runway lights. The project was funded primarily with \$8.6 million in federal and state grants.

Recreation

- The \$2.7 million Hubert Soccer Complex was unveiled in September. The new complex is located on 33 acres of land on Cobb Parkway near Mars Hill Road in Acworth, and consists of four full-sized, lighted soccer fields, concession/restroom building, maintenance building, picnic pavilion and playground. Fields are irrigated using groundwater from a dedicated onsite well.

- Oakdale Park on Atlanta Road just north of Cumberland Parkway near Smyrna opened in May, providing another Cobb access point to the multi-use Silver Comet Trail – now cited as the longest paved trail in America. Development of this \$475,468, 1.5-acre “pocket park” was funded with a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant, with construction management provided by the Cobb Department of Transportation.

- The \$250,000 Pitner Road Dog Park opened in May to serve canine guests and their human companions. The 2.5-acre park, in west Cobb, includes two separate fenced areas – one for small dogs and the other for big dogs.

- Five parcels of property were purchased using the \$40 million

parks bond passed in 2006. The five properties at Henderson Road/Veterans Memorial Highway, Brownsville Road, Stilesboro Road, Dallas Highway and Wesley Chapel Roads totaled more than 300 acres at a cost of approximately \$34 million.

- A record 41 projects were completed through the department’s matching grant program this year, resulting in more than \$376,000

in park improvements. The program provides matching funds for capital improvements to volunteer associations that offer programs in county parks. Since the program’s inception, more than \$3 million in improvements were made to Cobb parks.

- Two new programs were offered to the special needs population in Cobb. A partnership with Keep Cobb Beautiful completing beautification projects at Jim Miller Park on Earth Day

earned an Environmental Stewardship Award. Special Olympics Georgia held its 2008 Indoor Winter Games in Cobb with more than 2,300 athletes competing.

- Ten new tennis courts opened in Cobb County in 2008.



At Harrison Tennis Center, six new mini-courts – the first of their kind to be built in the United States – opened in October. These were built under United States Tennis Association specifications for 36-foot courts to be used by children and special needs adults and youth. This project cost \$150,000 and was partially funded through grants and donations.

- New \$80,000 concession/restroom buildings were completed in August to support football associations at Wild Horse Creek Park on Macedonia Road in Powder Springs and Hurt Road Park in Marietta.

- Funded by a \$30,000 state grant and with in-kind donations from the Friends for the East Cobb Park, a new 24-foot by 44-foot picnic pavilion was constructed at the East Cobb Park on Roswell Road. Future plans include installation of playground equipment adjacent to the new pavilion.

- The BMX bicycle track at Noonday Park has a new combination pavilion and storage building. The new \$15,000 building provides



storage, a shaded area, and a place for race timers to set up during competitions.

- A new restroom and maintenance building was completed on the property leased from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Acworth. Located on Old Stilesboro Road between County Line Road and Cheatham Road, the building and its parking area will provide a base for people wishing to access the 1,450 acre tract.

- Under an agreement between Cobb County Government and the Cobb Board of Education, four new lighted tennis courts were constructed at Big Shanty Park on Kennesaw Due West Road in Kennesaw. The \$380,000 courts are adjacent to the existing courts at Kennesaw Mountain High School and will share parking with the school.

- Renovation projects funded through the lease of cell phone towers in the parks system included resurfacing and reconstruction of tennis courts at Wallace Park, Bells Ferry Park and Sweet Mountain Park.

Water

■ The Cobb County Toilet Rebate Program has helped more than 4,000 homeowners since its start in November 2007. A new toilet valve rebate program for multi-family customers began in May. Online forms were developed to simplify applying for new landscape exemptions and for reporting water ban violations and incidents of water waste throughout the county. The Pick 10 Campaign was created to provide easy conservation activities each resident could adopt to save 10 gallons of water a day.

■ In an effort to be better stewards of water resources, the county spent \$140,000 to install wells for irrigation systems at Tramore, Noon-day, Mud Creek and Hubert soccer complexes. These projects will provide irrigation water and protect the county's investment in the landscapes and sports fields in our system.

■ Cobb County's proactive approach to water efficiency resulted in significant water savings during the historic drought. Since severe drought was declared in September 2007, Cobb County residents have saved approximately 15 million gallons of water a day. Initiatives can be found at cobbwater.org/efficiency.htm.



■ In March, the Board of Commissioners awarded a \$305 million construction contract to provide needed long-term sewer conveyance capacity and equalization for the Sweetwater Creek and Nickajack Creek basins in western and southern Cobb County. This will allow Cobb to eliminate two major pumping stations and about 87,000 linear feet of aging sewer line and force main.

■ The South Cobb Tunnel project entails constructing a six-mile, 27-foot excavated diameter tunnel located in hard rock, with depths ranging from 150 to 400 feet. The main tunnel will begin near the intersection of Maxham Road and Old Alabama Road, then lead to the South Cobb Water Reclamation Facility. The project also includes building a deep lift station with a capacity of 130 million gallons per day at the South Cobb Water Reclamation Facility to pump wastewater from the tunnel to the plant for treatment. Construction began in July and is projected to be complete in summer 2014.

■ The construction of the new solids processing facility at the R.L. Sutton Water Reclamation Facility was completed in the fall. The \$56

million facility includes a solids handling building with two fluidized bed incinerators, a dewatering system consisting of four centrifuges, cake pumps and screw feeders, sludge silos, polymer system and controls.

- The Customer Service Division upgraded its billing system to better serve customer accounts. The move to a Web-based product streamlined the process for assisting the water system's approximately 175,000 customers. With new call agent software, customer service representatives are able to assist customers faster by monitoring and managing call volume.

- The Water System is in the process of developing tools that assist with asset management. One of the tools used is a Computerized Maintenance Management System that allows creation of a registry of assets and associated maintenance activities. The Computerized Maintenance Management System will allow optimization of resource utilization.

- Using the Automated Vehicle Locate System and equipping



selected vehicles with laptop computers has enabled the department to stage four vehicles and crews at two water reclamation facilities. This has helped conserve fuel and reduce operational costs by saving travel time to various project sites. A new work order system also helps crews to wirelessly receive and reply to work orders.

- The Water System won numerous awards from the Georgia Association of Water Professionals, including a Platinum Award for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit Compliance for nine consecutive years of compliance by the R.L. Sutton Water Reclamation Facility and seven consecutive years of compliance by the Northwest Water Reclamation Facility. The Noonday Water Reclamation Facility was honored with a Gold Award for its compliance during 2007, while the Cobb County Water Quality Laboratory was selected for the 2007 Quality Assurance Award.

- In March, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources saluted Cobb County Adopt-A-Stream with its Watershed Award for successfully implementing the program goals.

Remarks from the County Manager

David Hankerson
County Manager



Progress doesn't happen without effort and effective progress doesn't happen without careful planning. Cobb County government employees, led by the Board of Commissioners, have consistently provided the elements needed for success in challenging times

throughout the past year. For example, Cobb County is a pioneer when it comes to mixing sensible progress with environmental concerns, making it one of the leading "green" communities in metro Atlanta.

The Board of Commissioners responded to the ongoing regional drought in several ways, including offering incentives for residents to cut back on their water use through the toilet rebate program. It then reduced water consumption – and costs – by installing low flow devices in all county buildings. We installed wells and irrigation systems for several parks and a fire station and helped educate the public on ways residents could take part in conservation efforts. We are planning to build the new Superior Court building in accordance with Leadership and Environmental Design certification



standards, meaning it will be energy efficient and incorporate recycled materials in the construction.

In addition to providing a benefit to the public with our environmental efforts, we are laying groundwork for the important lessons our children must learn. In February, we began constructing the \$5 million Cobb

County Safety Village, which will be a scaled-down version of our community where youths can have hands-on lessons in how to handle real-life risks. We are also excited about the benefits we can expect from the South Cobb Tunnel, which we started constructing in July. This six-mile wastewater conveyance is designed to cut costs and enhance the capacity of our current system.

Finally, I want to thank our county employees for their hard work and sacrifices. Maintaining our budget and high-quality services to the public falls upon their shoulders and they have always stepped up in the most trying circumstances.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Hankerson". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.



*100 Cherokee Street
Marietta, Georgia 30090
770.528.1000
Cobb County...Expect the Best!*

www.CobbCounty.org