



Suwanee connects

suwanee.com | April 2021

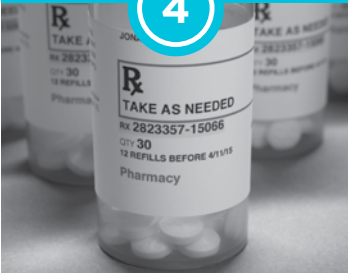
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Fire Station 13
Returns to Downtown

Let's Build a Better BUFORD HIGHWAY

Editor's Note: After a long construction schedule, the Better Buford Highway reconstruction project is starting to take shape - sidewalks, parking spaces, bike lanes, and the signature roundabout are all emerging. Like many large projects, construction delays have extended the overall timeline, but there is a light at the end of this construction tunnel. As this is being written, substantial completion is set for late summer. Now is a great time to revisit some of the community goals this transformational project will address.

Suwanee's portion of Buford Highway has historically been a relatively nondescript, typical state route: a simple two lane road primarily carrying local traffic through the middle of the city, passing by parks, businesses, and homes through the heart of Old Town.

However, studies indicate that Buford Highway serves Suwanee's residents as a *local*, rather than a *commuter* road. North and south of the city, Buford Highway has a starkly different character: with four-plus lanes, it serves vehicular travel reasonably well, but is daunting for pedestrians and bikers.

In 2007, the city began collecting citizen input for the *Downtown Suwanee Master Plan*, a comprehensive land use and transportation study of the downtown area. Participating residents and business owners expressed the sentiment that, while they wanted transportation improvements to Buford Highway, they also wanted them

to be provided in a manner that didn't further divide the city and didn't transform the road into yet another higher-speed thoroughfare.

Armed with this information, the city hired a team of transportation experts to evaluate different options for the road, prioritizing a community road over a commuter road. The resulting plan, based on proven context sensitive design principals, suggested a road that:

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"The end result will be a better road that will handle a similar volume of traffic as today, but in a safer manner."

- Josh Campbell,
City of Suwanee
Planning Director



Click here for a video and more info about our Better Buford Highway

City of Suwanee Wins

5 Southeastern Festivals & Events Association AWARDS

The best and brightest reimagined events were spotlighted at the Southeast Festivals and Events Association's virtual awards on February 24. Festivals and events throughout the region were recognized for their strength, resilience, and creativity while trying to lift local economies and bring communities together safely with their reimagined events in our new socially distant world.

The City of Suwanee took home three awards, including:

Best COVID Community Response

Various community initiatives, such as open air seating, Suwanee-branded masks, a virtual concert series, and more

Best Social Media

Top This! tabletop painting

Best T-Shirt

Spring "Fake" 2020

Additionally, two vendors were nominated by the city and also won in their categories:

Sponsor of the Year

Quantum National Bank

Best Supporting Member

Eventeny event hosting web platform

The Southeast Festivals & Events Association (SFEA) is a 501 (c) 6 membership-based organization comprised of festival and event planners, venues, and industry service providers. SFEA was founded in 2009 to strengthen the festival and event industry throughout the southeast United States by hosting educational sessions, networking opportunities, award recognition, and additional events throughout the year; thus, allowing for continued professional growth within the festivals and events industry.



ART CAN BE FOUND EVERYWHERE— EVEN HANGING ON A LIMB!

Longtime Suwanee residents know to keep an eye on the tree branches in the spring - not just to enjoy the dogwood blossoms, but to search for pieces from the City of Suwanee's annual Art on a Limb program. You may find this year's Art on a Limb piece *actually hanging on a limb!*

Local artist Vickie McCrary created the City Hall bird houses that were selected as this year's Art on a Limb piece. McCrary is the founder of the North Gwinnett Arts Association and a former Gwinnett County Public Schools high school art teacher. McCrary has also served on the City of Suwanee's Public Art Commission. She currently paints and shows her work at her studio space at Tannery Row Artist Colony in Buford.

Through the Art on a Limb program, two pieces of art are hidden daily along one of the greenways or within city parks throughout the month of May; those who find the art pieces get to keep them.



IF YOU'RE ONE OF THE LUCKY ONES TO FIND AN ART ON A LIMB PIECE IN ONE OF THE PARKS OR ON THE TRAILS DURING THE MONTH OF MAY, BE SURE TO SHARE A PHOTO WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!
[#ARTONALIMB2021](#)

ONE GENERATION PLANTS THE TREES; ANOTHER GETS THE SHADE.

Approximately 100 volunteers celebrated Arbor Day at Sims Lake Park on February 20! Adults, children, families, and scout troops helped plant:

30 trees

including dogwoods, fringe, Chinese pistache, little gem magnolias, and Japanese maples

55 azaleas

including the George Tabor (pink), Formosa (red), and Mrs. Gerbering (white) varieties

36 sweet flag ground covers

“This day was a wonderful coming together of the Suwanee community to provide great value for our future generations,” said Bill Stinehart, City of Suwanee Environmental Services Manager. “Trees provide oxygen, reduce erosion and water runoff, reduce energy cost, improve air quality, and create needed wildlife habitats. A big THANK YOU to everyone who came and made this day a huge, fun success!”



Suwanee's Orienteering!

Local Scout Scott Eyre designed and recently completed installing our city's first orienteering course at Suwanee Creek Park as part of his Eagle Scout rank requirement.

Orienteering is a sport of navigation: part cross country running and part Scouting, it's typically a timed event across a mostly natural landscape, where participants navigate through a series of checkpoints along the way.

The course is a one-mile trek visiting 19 points as shown on a map that can be found at Suwanee.com under Parks. At each point, hikers turn an angle and travel a set distance to find the next orienteering marker set in the park. Starting at point 1, using a compass, hikers turn to the azimuth listed on the map until they have discovered all 19 markers.

Suwanee Creek Park is also home to an 18-hole disc golf course, two pavilions, picnic tables, and outdoor classrooms, as well as the trailhead for the Suwanee Creek Greenway.

The City of Suwanee has been the beneficiary of multiple Scout projects, including a human sundial and concrete ping pong table at Sims Lake Park, Free Little Libraries, and multiple soil stabilization and erosion control projects. If you are interested in completing a Scout project with the City of Suwanee, please contact City of Suwanee Environmental Services Manager Bill Stinehart at bstinehart@suwanee.com.



Click here for a link to the orienteering map at Suwanee.com!

JU ST SAY NO

Suwanee PD is an Official Drug Take Back Location

Do you have a medicine cabinet full of old, expired meds? The Suwanee Police Department is registered with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration to collect unneeded medicines and safely dispose of pharmaceuticals containing controlled substances and other medicines. Citizens can dispose of these items safely and anonymously by dropping them off at the Suwanee PD disposal box any time Monday through Friday, 8 am-5pm.

Both prescription and over-the-counter medicines can be discarded, as well as vitamins, pet medicines, and vaping devices; no needles or liquids can be accepted. Please remember to remove all personal information before disposing of medicines.

“One in four teens has misused or abused prescription drugs, and most get them from their family medicine cabinet,” said Suwanee Police Chief Cass Mooney. “Our disposal box provides an easy, no-cost opportunity to remove medicines languishing in the home that are highly susceptible to misuse, abuse, and theft.”

Citizens can also dispose of unwanted medications at the Suwanee Police Department in conjunction with **National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on Saturday, April 24 from 10 am until 2 pm.** A program of the Drug Enforcement Administration, National Prescription Drug Take Back Day was responsible for safely disposing of nearly 883,000 pounds of medications nationwide during the October 2019 Take Back event; nearly 12.7 million pounds have been collected nationally since the inception of the National Prescription Drug Take Back Initiative in 2010.

“One in four teens has misused or abused prescription drugs, and most get them from their family medicine cabinet.”

Get a Clue Suwanee

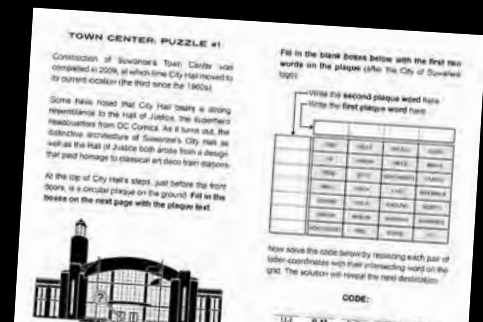
Calling all Nancy Drews, Hardy Boys, and other amateur sleuths: Clue Town Suwanee has arrived at the Suwanee Welcome Center!

A series of ready-to-solve puzzle hunts, Clue Town books cover a variety of walkable areas of Atlanta and beyond. The brand new Suwanee book takes players throughout Town Center Park, plus two mini hunts in Old Town and Sims Lake Park. Solvers use information on landmarks to solve puzzles; the solutions reveal how to get to the next checkpoint.

“When I design an outdoor hunt for a location, my goal is for the solver to see and learn something new, even though that person may be familiar with an area. There is a rich history and beauty to Suwanee that is fascinating, and the amount of public art on display is truly impressive. I hope that people take the time to explore Suwanee, with or without the hunt!” said Jay Carlson, Clue Town founder and creator.

Clue Town Suwanee is a fun adventure for all ages – the perfect activity for a date night, out-of-town guests, team building, birthday parties, and more! Ages 12 and up should be able to complete an entire hunt without adult assistance. The full-length hunt takes approximately 60-90 minutes, while the mini hunts average 30-50 minutes.

All three Suwanee puzzles – as well as a compass and pencil – are included in the Clue Town Suwanee book, which can be purchased for \$10 at the Suwanee Welcome Center at 3930 Charleston Market Street in Town Center.



FIRE STATION 13 To Return to Downtown Suwanee Area

The Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners recently announced that the new Fire Station 13 – formerly located at 343 Buford Highway at Suwanee Town Center – will be constructed on Suwanee Dam Road near the entrance to the library. It will be located adjacent to a city park project that is currently under design.

As part of a joint effort, the City of Suwanee will provide about two acres of land to the county for the new fire station at the intersection of the future Main Street/library driveway and Suwanee Dam Road. The county will fund and manage the design and construction of the station and will construct related road improvements to Main Street and the intersection with Suwanee Dam Road.

“This just shows the kind of good things that can happen when cities and county government work together for the benefit of the public,” said Kirkland Carden, Gwinnett County District 1 Commissioner in an interview with the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

Expected to open late 2021, the 11,000-square-foot station

will house a fire engine, an ambulance, and a minimum of five firefighters and paramedics. The state-of-the-art facility will also feature three drive-thru apparatus bays, gear and equipment room, industrial grade kitchen, administrative office area, and individual bunkroom cubicles with a locker room and shower facilities. The facility will be an EarthCraft-certified building and designed to accommodate future growth.

“This new station will enable Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services to continue to provide the outstanding service that people have come to expect,” said Chief Russell Knick. “It is strategically placed to enhance the emergency response capabilities and the community risk reduction initiatives of the department.”

The former fire station location was redeveloped in 2019 in partnership with the Downtown Development Authority when the lease with Gwinnett County expired. Fire Station 13 personnel have been serving Suwanee from existing stations in the area until the new facility is completed.

AWARD-WINNING CITY EMPLOYEES

The City of Suwanee staff recently gathered, via Zoom, to celebrate and recognize some of its top employees for the year 2020. The following employees were nominated by their peers and recognized by City Manager Marty Allen for exemplary service:

RESULTS CHAMPIONS

Champion of results and progress, recognized for achieving a monumental accomplishment in the past year.

Nicole Schnepfer / Public Works Department
Kim Towne / Community & Economic Development Dept.

TEAMWORK CHAMPIONS

Works behind the scenes to ensure everyone looks good and Team Suwanee can shine.

Officer Allen Parker / Police Department
Susan Van Nus / City Manager's Office

STEWARDSHIP CHAMPIONS

Promotes logic, procedure, and safety so that projects and initiatives exhibit Suwanee quality and are successful.

Lieutenant Dwayne Black / Police Department
James Miller / Public Works

INNOVATION CHAMPIONS

Never satisfied with the status quo and always seeking to improve; a creative visionary.

William Manigault / Public Works
Amie Sakmar / Business & Finance Department

CHAMPIONS OF THE PEOPLE

Understands that the actions and initiatives of Team Suwanee affect people and promotes it in his or her actions and influences others to do the same.

Officer Cale Mathis / Police Department
Candice Warlick / Human Resources Department

Several members of the Suwanee Police Department were recognized for outstanding work in 2020, including:

OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Detective Dawn Zaenglein

CIVILIAN OF THE YEAR

Communications Officer Taylor Ozment

SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR

Sergeant Simon Byun

TOP GUN

Sergeant Kevin Skinner

CHIEF'S AWARD

Sergeant Nick Jacobs

- Transports vehicles, but also serve pedestrians and cyclists,
- Sets the stage for on-street commerce and small-scale shopping,
- Better protects park visitors.

That new, better Buford Highway is finally emerging. Extending from McGinnis Ferry Road to George Pierce Park, Buford Highway will remain a two-lane road, but with two distinct design themes: a rural/suburban section and a town center/urban section. The better Buford Highway will include:

- A 10-foot wide greenway/bikeway on the east side of the roadway between McGinnis Ferry Road and Russell Street,
- A traffic-calming roundabout at Russell Street,
- Eight- to 13-foot wide sidewalks, on-street parallel parking, dedicated bike lanes, street trees, benches, and pedestrian scale lighting along the majority of both sides,
- Landscaped medians and center turn lanes at various locations,
- Minimized curb cuts and travel lanes reduced in width to help moderate vehicular speeds and increase safety.

“The end result will be a better road that will handle a similar volume of traffic as today, but in a safer manner,” said City of Suwanee Planning Director Josh Campbell. “Pedestrians will be able to walk more comfortably along the road from Town Center to Old Town, and crossing Buford Highway will also become much easier and safer.”

This is a joint project between the city and Georgia DOT. Visit suwanee.com for more information as the project progresses.

Context Sensitive Design (CSD) is a transportation term meaning that the road is intended to serve transportation needs while also balancing its impact on the overall community. A common goal of CSD projects is to develop a facility that is harmonious with the community, and preserves aesthetics, history, and environmental resources, while integrating these innovative approaches with traditional transportation goals for safety and performance.



GONE VIRTUAL

Suwanee is offering new approaches to conducting virtual business with the city by automating pavilion rentals and police report processes, while also providing a user-friendly online portal to improve customer experience.

“This new partnership will drive efficiency for staff, as well as improve the quality and convenience of services for community members,” said Donna Copeletti, Suwanee Police Office Administrator. “Digital police reports also provide an additional level of safety during this pandemic, as citizens previously had to visit our building in-person to obtain reports.”

Park pavilion rentals can be found at Suwanee.com under Explore > Parks. The request for police reports is located under Services > Police. Police reports can be requested electronically through a secure portal 3-5 business days after the report is taken. Payment can be made via the secure portal as well.



Scan to visit the Suwanee Police page at Suwanee.com



Scan to visit the Suwanee Parks page at Suwanee.com

OPEN AIR EVENTS ARE

back

IN SUWANEETOWN CENTER!



Visit **Suwanee.com** for more information!



SUWANEETOWN CENTER SUPERHERO 5K
APRIL 24 | 8:00 AM



GWINNETT CHAMBER BUTTON DOWN DASH 5K/10K
MAY 22 | 6:30 AM



WINTER FARMERS MARKET
EVERY SATURDAY IN APRIL
9:00 AM – NOON



FARMERS MARKET
EVERY SATURDAY
MAY 1 – SEPTEMBER 25
8:00 AM - NOON

Congratulations!

Suwanee Police Department Explorer Lieutenant **Aracely Hernandez** was the recipient of the inaugural Youth Leadership Award at the 2021 Valor Awards! The Lanier High School senior was honored at the ceremony on February 17. Presented by the Gwinnett Chamber, the Valor Awards honor the men and women who have performed heroic and extraordinary acts to protect and serve the citizens of Gwinnett. Congratulations, Aracely!



The Duluth, Lilburn, & Suwanee **Police Special Response Team** was also nominated for a Valor Award in the Public Safety Unit of the Year category. This multi-jurisdictional Special Response Team has conducted 30 high-risk search and arrest warrants with a strong emphasis in the area of Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC). As a result of these joint operations, there were a total of 17 felony arrests, nine of which were related to child pornography. They have also made several drug arrests and recovered over \$10,000 in stolen property.



Dr. Keith Thompson of Northbrook Middle School was named the 2021 Middle School Principal of the Year by the Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals on February 15. Dr. Thompson was honored for his ability to demonstrate personal excellence, as well as leader effectiveness, in across the areas of school culture (well-being, safety, equity, student-centered) and learning (result-oriented, collaborative leadership, innovation). Way to go, Dr. Thompson!

Welcome to **Suwanee CITY HALL**



BRANDON DAVIS
PUBLIC WORKS



ELTON HASSELL
CODE ENFORCEMENT

UPCOMING EVENTS

official newsletter of the city of suwanee, georgia

APRIL 21

3	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am
4	Community Sunrise Service	7:00 am
6	Planning Commission	6:30 pm
10	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am
14	Public Art Commission	6:00 pm
15	City Council Workshop	5:30 pm
17	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am
17	Happyfeat's Happy Hour 5K	3:00 pm
20	Downtown Development Authority	7:30 am
20	Zoning Board of Appeals	6:30 pm
24	Suwanee Arts Center Superhero 5K	8:00 am
24	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am
24	Drug Take Back Day (Police Dept.)	10:00 am
27	City Council Meeting	6:30 pm

MAY 21

1	Farmers Market	8:00 am
4	Planning Commission	6:30 pm
6	Public Art Commission	6:00 pm
8	Farmers Market	8:00 am
12	Public Art Commission	6:00 pm
13	City Council Workshop	5:30 pm
15	Farmers Market	8:00 am
18	Downtown Development Authority	7:30 am
18	Zoning Board of Appeals	6:30 pm
22	Gwinnett Chamber Button Down Dash	6:30 am
22	Farmers Market	8:00 am
25	City Council Meeting	6:30 pm
29	Farmers Market	8:00 am
31	City Hall CLOSED	

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MAYOR Jimmy Burnette 770/868-7115
COUNCIL Pete Charpentier 770/757-3323
Heather Hall 410/979-7905
Beth Hilscher 678/546-3388
Linnea Miller 678/592-4150
Larry Pettiford 678/464-3651

CITY MANAGER Marty Allen 770/945-8996
POLICE CHIEF Cass Mooney 770/945-8995
EDITOR Abby Wilkerson 770/945-3386

Unless otherwise noted, City of Suwanee public meetings are at City Hall, 330 Town Center Avenue. Dates subject to change; check suwanee.com for updates.

**CITY OF
SUWANEE,
GEORGIA**