

City of Suwanee

2006-07 Annual Report

One of America's best places to live!

Money magazine has let the whole country in on the City of Suwanee's not-so-well-kept secret: Suwanee is a great place to call home! With the magazine's August 2007 ranking of Suwanee as the 10th best small city in America in which to live, our community has received affirmation for many of the things that we do right.

At the City of Suwanee, we're proud of this national recognition and of the many other accolades the City has obtained over the past several years. But mostly we're gratified to serve a citizenry that is itself progressive, involved, and committed to continually enhancing the quality of life in Suwanee.

It is with respect that we report to that citizenry the City's accomplishments from our past fiscal year, July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007.

"I wouldn't live anywhere else in the greater Atlanta area. We don't get caught in traffic going to the grocery store, our kids have a ton of parks and greenspace to play in, we have one of the largest recreational soccer leagues in the country, and the whole town turns up all summer long to celebrate at Town Center concerts and fund-raising events. We are a community that is family-oriented, connected to our neighbors, and proud of where we live, work, and play."

—Terri Hintz, 13-year Suwanee resident

Here We Grow Again...

A future Suwanee icon

Design of Suwanee's **new City Hall** is nearly complete. BRPH of Marietta was selected through a design competition last August to create the two-story, 23,600-square-foot facility. The new City Hall is being designed to meet LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards. Construction is expected to begin later this year.

Restaurants added to Town Center menu

The **first full-service restaurants** opened at **Suwanee Town Center** in January. The addition of Five Guys, Ippolito's, and Olde Towne Tavern & Grille as well as the new businesses that have opened their doors, has quickly made the area around Town Center Park a hub of activity that rivals the popularity of Big Splash, the park's interactive fountain that has been operational for a little more than a year.

A great place to live, too

Businesses weren't the only ones to put out new welcome mats at Town Center. The **first residents** at Madison Park at **Town Center** set up house in February.

A lot more mixed use in Suwanee's future

Opus South Corporation received approval to create a **large multi-use project on a 148-acre tract** along Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road from near Satellite Boulevard to I-85. The project will include approximately 1 million square feet in hotel, office, and commercial space as well as 480 residential units.

The City of Suwanee issued 299 new business licenses this year.

With 1,472 people moving into the City limits between 2005 and 2006, according to U.S. Census estimates, Suwanee is the fastest-growing community in Gwinnett County.

What are others saying about Suwanee Town Center?

The buzz about Suwanee Town Center isn't just local. Sure, area communities working to create or re-create their downtowns frequently hold up Town Center as their model. But communities around the state and the Southeast also are taken with Suwanee's "front yard."

Houston (County) Peach editor J. Randolph Murray wrote in a recent column: "...the developers of Suwanee Town Center Park have created an ideal gathering place for shoppers, diners, and walkers. They also have created a sense of community in what was otherwise just another strip of roadway that motorists passed by obliviously on their way to somewhere else."

In May, KnoxNews, the online site for the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, quoted Farragut Commissioner Ron Honken as saying that Suwanee's Town Center is "as close to [a] Shangri-La of a community as I've ever seen."



Fiscal Fitness

"I just discovered your budget document and I'm 'blown away!' Incredible job!"

*—Brett Harrell
Executive Director,
Evermore Community
Improvement District*

Saving money

In December, Suwanee **refinanced** its voter-approved general obligation **open space bonds**, originally borrowed in 2002. This move will save the City more than \$1 million over the next 24 years.

Making dollars & cents make sense

Suwanee's budget documentation for this year was awarded the Government Finance Officers Association's **Distinguished Budget Presentation Award**. In order to receive this award, a government agency must satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation. In addition, Suwanee's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for 2005-06 received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association, an honor Suwanee has earned for the fourth consecutive year.

Keeping costs low

The City obtained a **\$6.6 million low-cost loan** late in 2006 for construction of the new City Hall. Because the City was able to keep loan costs down by issuing the bonds through its Urban Redevelopment Agency, no additional taxes will be necessary to fund City Hall construction.



Changing of the Guard

Alan Landers stepped down from his City Council post in March in order to move to another metro Atlanta county. **Kevin McOmber** was elected to fill the unexpired term in a June special election.

In March, **James Burnette**, who served on City Council from 1964-95, passed away at age 84.

Suwanee's first city manager, **Hardin Watkins**, left in April to take the town manager position in Garner, North Carolina, home of his beloved Tarheels. Watkins guided the day-to-day operations of the City for nearly 10 years. A search for Suwanee's new city manager is underway.

Mayor Nick Masino's new "real" job as vice president for economic development with the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce means that he will not run for re-election. Masino's term expires at the end of 2007.



New City Councilmember Kevin McOmber and his family.

Park Perks

Three in a row

For the third consecutive year, the Georgia Municipal Association and *Georgia Trend* magazine recognized the City of Suwanee with their prestigious **Trendsetter Award**, this time for our outstanding parks. Suwanee is the only city to have won the statewide award in each of the years it has been presented.

City puts designs on new park

Alpharetta-based landscape architect Cerulea, Inc. is finalizing **design of Suwanee's newest park**. **Sims Lake Park**, at 4600 Suwanee Dam Road, will include a figure-8 walking trail that will loop through woods and meadow areas as well as a 4-acre parkstead area for open play. The park, for which construction is anticipated to begin late in 2007, is located



photo by M. Michael Farr

on 62 acres that comprise what was previously one of the most sought-after properties in Suwanee. It was purchased by the City in 2003 through the Open Space Initiative.

Making the right connections

Work began in June on a **pedestrian bridge** that will connect Town Center to the Suwanee Creek Greenway. This project is one of several planned to enhance interconnectivity between Town Center and the greenway as well as historic Old Town.



photo by M. Michael Farr

"For the size community that Suwanee is [the Open Space Initiative] is clearly a very ambitious program. Probably the most unique aspect of the whole effort was the financial commitment made by the people who live in the community. There are not many [small] towns that would put that much financial backing into parks and recreation programs."

—Bryan Shuler, Gainesville City Manager and 2007 Trendsetter Award judge

Law & Order

Suwanee CARES

The six-week Suwanee CARES **traffic enforcement program** proved effective in reducing the number of accidents and injuries along one of Suwanee's most heavily traveled roadways. The enhanced enforcement along the Lawrenceville-Suwanee corridor from December 13, 2006-January 31, 2007 resulted in more citations for drivers, but also eight fewer accidents and six fewer injuries than in the previous year.

How fast are you going?

In March, the police department rolled out a new tool to enhance driver awareness and improve roadway safety: a mobile, radar-controlled **speed trailer**. The trailer's digital display makes drivers aware of the speed at which they're traveling.

Three for three

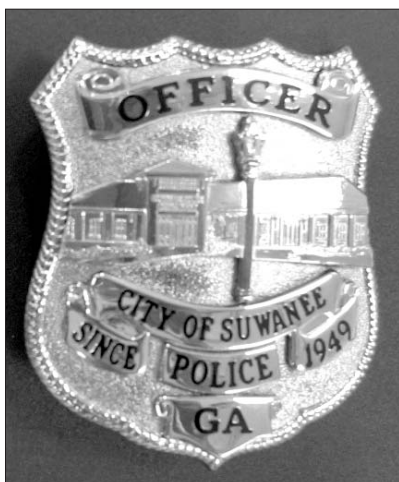
The bad news is that the City of Suwanee experienced three armed bank robberies in the past year. The good news is that in each instance, sometimes with the assistance of other law enforcement agencies, the **Suwanee PD apprehended** each of the **alleged robbers**.

Moving on up

A 22-year law enforcement professional, **Janet Moon** was **promoted to deputy chief** of the Suwanee Police Department in July, becoming one of the highest-ranking female police managers in Gwinnett County. As deputy chief, Moon is second-in-command and responsible for the day-to-day operations of the department.

Badge of honor

Suwanee police officers are sporting **new silver- and gold-plated custom-designed badges**, the first new



badges for the department in about 25 years. "Suwanee is a community of pride," said Chief Mike Jones. "We want our badges to reflect that as well."

Order in the court

Suwanee's friendly and efficient court clerks processed an average of **925 traffic citations** each month and an additional **712 red light camera-generated citations**.

Policing by the Numbers

22,844

Calls for service

This number is down 10% from the previous year

1,012

Neighborhood residents attending 65 PACT meetings

1,247

Traffic accidents

296

Injuries due to traffic accidents

3

Deaths due to traffic accidents

59

New teen drivers and their parents who participated in 5 PRIDE programs

10,326

Citations issued

This number is down 2.4% from the previous year

36

Graduates of two Citizens Police Academy sessions

"Thank you for having an officer in our neighborhood in the mornings to slow cars down....[M]y dad says he feels that I am safer. [T]hanks a bunch!"

—Emily Pitman, age 12, Suwanee resident

At Your Service

Service at your fingertips

On September 7, the City of Suwanee took customer service to a whole new (technological) level. Through a link at www.suwanee.com, Suwanee citizens have 24/7 access to the City's citizen/customer service request management system, **S.E.E. Online**. Some 378 requests were received through the new system.

We've been working on the railroad

On behalf of citizens and motorists, the City of Suwanee spearheaded and contributed financially to the cooperative effort to **repair the rough railroad crossing** on Suwanee Dam Road. Thanks to the work of Norfolk-Southern Railroad and Gwinnett County, crossing the railroad track is now a much more pleasant experience.

Roadmap to Suwanee's future

Work has begun on Suwanee's **2030 Town Master Plan**. City officials, planning consultants, and citizens began discussing in May what the Suwanee of the future might look like. The master plan is expected to be completed sometime in 2008.

Making a better first impression

Suwanee staff members took initial steps in the City's plan to **enhance** the appearance, functionality, and economic health of **the Suwanee Gateway/I-85 area**. Staff members identified and addressed a multitude of aesthetic and code-related issues. In addition, Suwanee contracted with Street Smarts to landscape the I-85 entry/exit areas; landscaping will be installed this fall. The City also began work with redpepper inc. to develop a branding campaign for the area.

Smooth sailing driving

Thanks to the availability of SPLOST funds, Suwanee's public works and inspections department was able to fund and coordinate **street resurfacing and safety improvements** on, or portions of, 18 neighborhood roads, totaling approximately 3 miles of roadway.

Green is our favorite color

Most City of Suwanee vehicles are white, but at least one has an engine of green. Early in the calendar year, Suwanee acquired a **hybrid 2006 Chevrolet Silverado 1500** extended cab pick-up truck. "The City of Suwanee wants to do what it can to conserve energy," said Public Works Supervisor Rodney Beck, to whom the vehicle is assigned. "I guess if we all did a little something, it could make a big difference."

Above-board government

The Georgia Municipal Association recognized Suwanee as a **Georgia Certified City of Ethics** at its annual convention June 23-26. Over the past year, Suwanee adopted an ethics ordinance that establishes procedures for dealing with ethics complaints and outlines prohibited conduct by City officials and staff.

Service by the Numbers

788

People who receive water service from the City of Suwanee

0

Findings or management comments in annual audit

31

Rezoning and variances considered

418

Certificates of occupancy issued

3,420

Work orders completed by the public works department

"I can't tell you how much I appreciate your efforts in this matter. You've certainly gone way above and beyond my expectations.... Thanks very much for your time and expertise! It's people like you that give 'customer service' a great name."

—Jeffrey Kitchens, Suwanee resident

We Like to Have Fun, Too

The 2007 Art on a Limb program featured leaf-themed tiles created by local artist Sandra Nissen. Each May, commissioned pieces of artwork are hidden along the Suwanee Creek Greenway for finders to keep as a means of celebrating and bringing attention to the arts as well as the four-mile trail.

"I was the lucky person today that discovered the beautiful clay tile by Sandra Nissen.... I work just down the street from the park and spend many lunch breaks walking the trails and enjoying the wildlife. It was a sheer delight to find this beautiful tile."

—Teresa Corso



*"Wow, what an amazing event.
The ASO was great!"*
—Sheila Crumrine

Art on a Limb

Suwanee's 2006 **Art on a Limb** program won multiple awards, including a national Savvy Award from the City-County Communications and Marketing Association for Most Creative Activity with Least Dollars Spent. The 2006 arts and nature awareness program featured Suwanee-themed paintings by Melody Orr on a "canvas" made from pieces of the City's old water tower, which was dismantled in 2005.

Bringing Beethoven to the 'burbs

Thanks to the financial support of Peoples Bank & Trust and other community-minded businesses, the **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra** performed at Town Center Park on the last day of the fiscal year. This was the first time that the full ASO had performed outdoors in Gwinnett County in more than 20 years. The ASO concert was one of 20 City-sponsored or co-sponsored community events this year, and the 9,000 in attendance at Town Center Park were among the estimated 93,000 that showed up for a City of Suwanee event over the past year.

Holy cow!

Four colorful creatures have moved into PlayTown Suwanee. The painted, **life-size fiberglass cows** add another dimension of fun and interest to Suwanee's super playground. The cows include Chattamoochee, a 2003 CowParade Atlanta cow purchased for the City by the Suwanee Day Committee; Blue Bell the Butterfly Cow and Dottie, designed by local artists and painted by the community last year as a fundraiser for Long Beach, Mississippi; and Matilda, who was donated to the City.



Old sweet song

A mural created for and **donated** to the City of Suwanee by a group of professional sign artists was unveiled at an April 28 Georgia Music Hall of Fame concert at Town Center Park. The mural, which depicts a night-time concert with members of the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in the audience, now graces the back of the Town Center stage. Sign artist Sonny Franks of Lilburn coordinated creation of the mural and the gold-leaf sign that now adorns Pierce's Corner.

Suwanee City Council



Nick Masino, Mayor
770/945-4607, ext. 555
masino@suwanee.com

Jimmy Burnette, Mayor Pro Tem
770/945-3492
jburnette@suwanee.com



Jace Brooks
770/831-0499
jbrooks@suwanee.com

Dan Foster
770/614-5750
dfoster@suwanee.com



Kevin McOmber
770/271-5427
kmcomber@suwanee.com

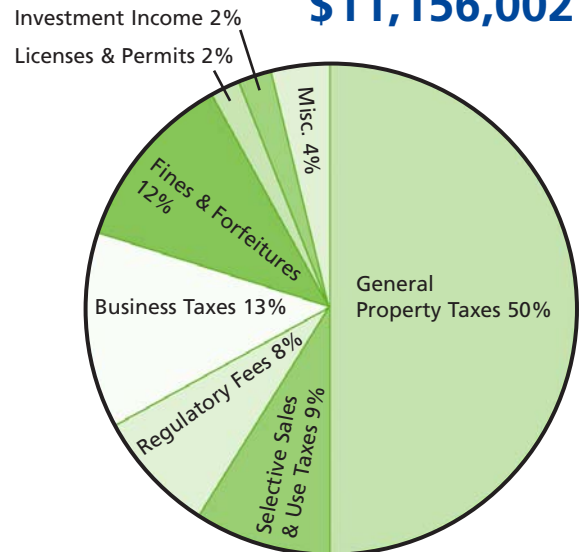
Jeannine Rispin
404/375-6095
jrispin@suwanee.com



2006-07 General Fund

Revenues

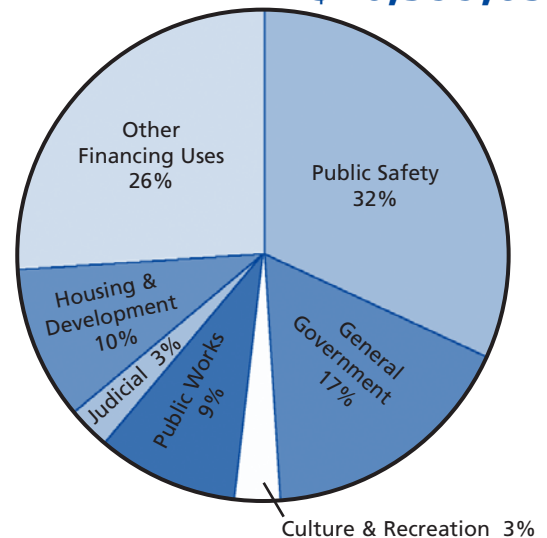
\$11,156,002



Among the revenue sources included in the "Miscellaneous" category are intergovernmental grants, charges for services, penalties and interest on taxes, and contributions.

Expenditures

\$10,399,651



"Other Financing Uses" includes funding for:

- Open Space Bond Repayment (12% of total expenditures)
- City Hall at Town Center (7%)
- Public Works Yard Expansion (6.5%)
- Other (0.5%)

Financial data accurate as of July 24, 2007.
May not represent exact year-end figures.