

Chatham County CONNECTION



JULY, 2007

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT 2007

Tuesday, August 7

The Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department is entering into a new era of law enforcement which will provide quality services in partnership with our community that promotes safe and secure neighborhoods. The City of Savannah and Chatham County are encouraging all of the communities to join us on August 7, 2007 in forming a Police - Community Partnership during the 24th Annual National Night Out.

Last year's National Night Out campaign involved citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations and local officials from 11,125 communities from all 50 states, US territories, Canadian cities and military bases worldwide. See this campaign has spread world wide and instead of lighting up your city, county or state, we are now lighting up the entire world.

The former Savannah Police Department achieved national recognition starting back in 1995, and has held true to its commitment to serving the community to this date. The Savannah - Chatham Metropolitan will continue to serve the community in the best way possible, "by working with the community."

National Night Out is designed to: (1) heighten crime and drug prevention awareness; (2) generate support for and participation in local anti-crime programs, (3) strengthen neighborhood spirit and police - community partnerships; (4) send a message to criminals letting them know that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

National Night Out spearheads a year long Community Oriented Policing project, which is county wide. We are hoping to get more and more communities involved in assisting the police with information gathering

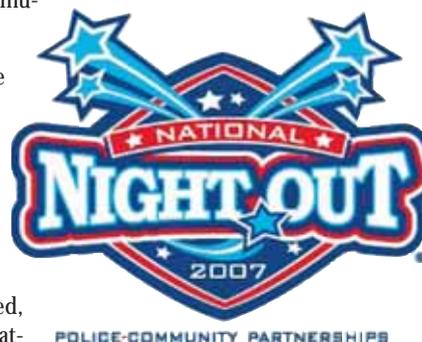
and trust based communication. This requires local government, police, and law abiding citizens working together to make our streets safe and improve the quality of life in our community.

Communication is vital to this collaboration. The key ingredients to building the police - community partnership involves citizens reporting crimes to the police and reclaiming their neighborhoods. National Night Out is a campaign that starts such actions each year and reminds the community of their responsibilities.

As Assistant Chief of Police Lovett stated at the beginning of the 23rd annual National Night Out campaign on August 1, 2006, "If we could only keep the momentum going year round." That is exactly what we need to keep the community involved, informed and actively participat-

ing in community oriented policing year round.

Now it's time for all Savannah and Chatham County residents to shed the biggest light possible on Crime. Lets all show a brilliant display of LIGHTS within our neighborhoods on August 7, 2007, between the hours of 5:00pm and 10:00pm, in support of police - community partnerships. Let's LIGHT UP CHATHAM COUNTY AND SHOW CRIME HAS NO WHERE TO HIDE.



CHILD CARE COUNTS WITH COOPERATIVE EXTENSION!

Child care is the third highest household expense for most families of young children. Approximately 62% of Georgia's children under age six have both parents in the workforce and some form of child care is needed while the parents are working. With this in mind, the need for high-quality care and well-trained staff continues to grow in our community, as well as, the state. The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension in Chatham County can provide a vast source of research-based information for childcare providers and parents.

In a partnership known as the Chatham Childcare Collaborative (CCC), community agencies concerned with quality of child care have combined resources to meet the community needs. CCC provides state-accepted training to childcare providers and teachers, center direc-

tors, family childcare providers, and parents. The current partners include: UGA Cooperative Extension in Chatham County, Early Start Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, Fort Stewart/Hunter AAF Child and Youth Development Services, and Savannah Technical College. This collaborative effort has been recognized by the National Association Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) by earning their Collaborative Partnership Award.

The Cooperative Extension and its partners provide many training opportunities in the community throughout the year. Licensed providers are required to complete 10 hours of training annually. The 14th Annual Early Childhood Institute (ECI) is scheduled for Oct. 21, at Armstrong Atlantic State University. This annual event draws interest from

child care providers throughout the state and South Carolina. Participants look forward to a nationally recognized keynote speaker, informative workshops, vendors, exhibits, door prizes, and networking with other professionals. This year's keynote is Sharon McDonald "A Story, a Poem, and a Crayon Box." Join us for a day of learning and fun! Other opportunities for training include: Super Saturday events offering opportunities for providers to earn six hours of training quarterly. A Director's Roundtable is held the third Wed. of every other month at a local restaurant. The next will be held on Sept. 19. Also, special trainings can be arranged with centers based on training needs.

For more information on selecting high-quality care, you can view the UGA Childcare Quality Matters

Interactive web site at www.fcs.uga.edu/ext/ccqm/index.php. Children who receive high quality care develop better language, math, and social skills, exhibit fewer behavior problems, and tend to be better prepared for entrance into school. Child care lasts a lifetime - make sure it is quality care.

The Chatham County Cooperative Extension provides a variety of services to local citizens. Issues affecting families and youth, nutrition, housing, energy conservation, financial management, 4-H Youth, and agriculture are just a few areas of the multitude of services. To receive training publications, become a volunteer, or obtain more information about topics of interest contact the Chatham County Cooperative Extension at (912) 652-7981 or email uge3051@uga.edu.

Message from the Chairman



Chairman
Pete Liakakis

2007 State of the County

Fellow Commissioners, Elected Officials, Chatham County Staff and Fellow Citizens. I am here to report to you on what I would have to call "another very good year" for your Chatham County Government. During the past twelve months, your county commission has:

- Worked together for the best interests of all our citizens.
- Put aside political distractions that can hinder action.
- Respected each others opinions and points of view.
- Trusted our professional staff to do their jobs.
- Most importantly, listened to our citizens.

Together we can best do the work that we were elected to do.

Having faced considerable challenges when we first came together, the progress we've made has been an outgrowth of the teamwork that each of us has been committed to. I thank you and the citizens of Chatham County thank you.

Our progress has not gone unnoticed by our peers. The recent issue of Georgia County Government, the statewide magazine of A.C.C.G., had an excellent feature article on Chatham County's government. I think it sums up much

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CHATHAM COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS & INNOVATIONS THIS PAST YEAR:

- Adopted current County budget on time and before the beginning of the fiscal year. This was the first time for this since we went to the 1 July to 30 June budget period.
- Amassed \$4.5 million in M&O and \$2.5 million in SSD to devote to needed and long-unfunded capital improvements
- Approved and financed an innovative file-tracking system benefitting all County courts and the criminal justice system
- Funded exceptional and noteworthy 65th anniversary celebration for the founding of the Eighth Air Force involving veterans and the youth community
- Approved volunteer income tax preparation assistance program for County employees earning an income under \$38,000 annually
- Entered a partnership with the City of Tybee to complete the east end of McQueen's Trail
- Continued development of a convenient nexus for County offices at the Citizens Service Center on Eisenhower
- Progress made in building a new animal control shelter
- On track to construct a new roof at the Aquatic Center
- Opened a completely renovated Skidaway Narrows Boat Ramp and accessible parking lot
- Continued to use court workers in picking up litter and general maintenance under the supervision of Public Works and Park Services Department
- Generated \$700,000 through the sale of surplus properties and conveyed more than 15 properties to Habitat for Humanity, City of Savannah and Land Bank Authority as part of neighborhood redevelopment within the Benjamin Van Clark and Cuyler-Brownville communities for affordable housing.
- Obtained the permit for the 2,100 linear foot Riverwalk Extension on Hutchinson Island by completing environmental requirements, including creation of a saltmarsh mitigation area. The mitigation area not only assists several county projects but also aids the City of Savannah with mitigating saltmarsh for the Savannah Landing Riverwalk project. Construction begins summer 2007.
- Entered into an agreement with the Georgia Land Trust to provide an inventory of all properties held in restrictive covenants, which will be provided as an overlay on SAGIS and available for public access.
- Entered into an agreement with the Savannah Tree Foundation for a partnership for managing several public landscape projects, including Mother Mathilda Beasley Park.
- Assisted the Lepageville Cemetery Association in design and construction of a memorial at the historic site off Wahlstrom Road.
- Completed intergovernmental agreements with the Trade Center Authority and Chatham Area Transit which identified responsibility for water ferry docks on the Savannah River. During the past several years, the County served as project manager to construct more than 1,000 linear feet of docks for water ferry service and recreation.
- Revised the lease of Parcel 7 on Hutchinson Island and worked cooperatively with the Trade Center Authority on a Master Plan which provides for its development as a mixed-use urban area (downtown extension) but remains consistent with the Convention Center's economic development mission.
- The Magistrate Court has the highest volume of cases filed of all the courts with over 18,000 criminal and civil matters having been filed in 2006. Completed implementation of an efficient scanning procedure to accommodate the numerous filings that come through the Court.
- This court has a new criminal case management system that has been developed by the ICS department which aided in criminal matters being handled more efficiently.
- The County Attorney's Office is in the process of filing numerous in rem petitions to place properties back on the tax rolls. The estimated fair market value of these properties exceed \$100,000. In addition, the County Attorney's Office will be able to collect approximately \$8,000 in attorney's fees.
- The County Attorney's Office is involved in recovering delinquent taxes through bankruptcy proceedings. The County Attorney's Office attends hearings and is successful in the collection of taxes on numerous properties that are subject to bankruptcy cases. The County Attorney's Office also has a strong communication with the Tax Commissioner's Office and has hired outside counsel which has successfully collected large sums of taxes for the County.
- The County Attorney's Office supervises the attorney for the Board of Appeals in handling tax appeals to the Superior Court of Chatham County, and has implemented a mediation day between the taxpayer and the Board of Appeals with a resolution rate greater than 70%. This disposes of tax appeals without litigation. This has been so successful that the Superior Court has adopted it as a standing order, requiring taxpayers to participate prior to allowing them to proceed with litigation in Superior Court. These cases are handled expeditiously to ensure a fair, cost effective resolution and equitable payment of taxes.
- The County Attorney's Office has accomplished all of the above described matters while having the smallest in-house legal staff of any county of comparable size of the State.
- The most significant project undertaken for the Clerk of Superior Court was writing a new ordinance that established three new committees within the structure of Chatham County. The first committee is the Board of Directors for the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), the second is the Business Group and the third is the Technical Group. Each, as defined by the ordinance, is charged with enhancing the sharing of information within the CJIS. They are tasked with reducing the duplication of effort, the creation of automated systems where appropriate, maintaining accurate and timely record keeping and reporting, and overall improvement in the Criminal Justice Information System.
- Mosquito Control's goals for the catch basin treatment program using motorized scooters in Chatham County's "hot zone" were fully realized in 2006. An average of 8,082 catch basins were treated six times from May through November. There was no indication of any West Nile virus activity in the targeted treatment area where eight residents diagnosed with West Nile fever/encephalitis in 2003 resided.
- Recognizing that in 2006 the weather cooperated in minimizing mosquito populations, the combined changes in the West Nile virus and adult mosquito control program resulted in an 82% reduction in pesticide use, by volume, comparing 2005 to 2006. 10,499 gallons of mosquito adulticide chemicals were used in 2005 compared with 1,880 gallons applied in 2006. Adult mosquito control operations were conducted almost exclusively with aircraft in 2006. This allowed our ground spraying staff to focus their efforts on catch basin treatment for West Nile virus control.
- The spray system on the Piper Aztec airplane was redesigned and updated for the 2006 mosquito season allowing the treatment of 5,000 acres per mission. Using the previously selected pesticide and the old spray system, only 2,000 acres per mission could be treated.
- Mosquito Control partnered with Chatham County Emergency Management (CEMA), Georgia Emergency Management, U. S. Coast Guard, Georgia Air National Guard, and the Georgia State Patrol to form an Aviation Support Operations Center (ASOC). The purpose is to coordinate helicopter rescue and recovery operations during emergencies in cooperation with CEMA. The Mosquito Control facility serves as the ASOC, and Mosquito Control's Fixed-Wing Pilot serves as "Air Boss."
- Completion of Bell's Landing Boat Ramp restoration
- Held the Charlie Brooks Park Inaugural Baseball Tournament
- Completion of Tom Triplett Park Phase III improvements
- Organized the Conservation Celebration at Triplett Park
- Construction of the new roof at the Lake Mayer pavilion
- New sports lighting at Concord Soccer field
- Completed roof replacements at Memorial Stadium for the restrooms, locker rooms and press box
- Renovated the restrooms at Lake Mayer with in-house staff
- Awarded contract to construct new covered shelter at Wilmington Drop Off Center
- Painted Aquatic Center pools
- Approval for conceptual plan to relocate Public Works and Park Services
- Replaced metal grid deck on west-bound bridge at Causton Bluff
- Replaced backstop fencing and dugouts at AMBUC park
- Replaced scoreboards at AMBUC, Stell Park and Charlie Brooks Park
- Painted the exterior of the concession buildings at Stell Park and AMBUC
- Completed the compliance upgrade at the Pine Barren Wastewater Treatment Facility
- Upgraded the Central Avenue Lift Station
- Inter-connected Hunter's Ridge Water system to second water source
- Resurfaced over five miles of County roads with Local Assistance Road Program (LARP)
- Completed construction on Yucca Place, Mobley Street and Perkins Place
- Heather Street, Shore Avenue and Fountain Road paving is 90% complete
- Completed design contracts on Old Pine Barren Road and Palm Drive.
- Skidaway Island Emergency Ramp approach crossing construction is 50% complete
- Completed the new intersection for Mulberry Plantation on SR 21
- Awarded construction contract for the Old 204 Bridge Replacements
- Completed Red Fox/King George Intersection Improvements
- Completed design of improvements to Pipemakers Canal Phase 2, from SR25 to west of the airport
- Completed construction of the Georgetown Canal-St. Ives Culvert Drainage Improvement project
- Completed construction of new maintenance access road at Pipemakers Canal east of SR21
- Completed design and permitting of Wilmington Outfall project. Bids for project construction are being solicited.
- Completed design and permitting of Quacco Restoration Drainage Improvement project. Construction contract awarded.
- Completed design and construction of Lamarville-Diggs Avenue Drainage Improvement project.
- Completed design of Romney-Parkersburg Drainage Improvements. Acquisition of easements is 80% complete.
- Completed construction of new maintenance access road and culvert replacement as a part of the Westlake Drainage Improvement project.
- Construction of Halcyon Bluff drainage improvements is underway and 80% complete.
- Completed design of the Red Fox Drainage Improvements phase of the Fawcett Canal Drainage Improvement project. Acquisition of easements is 80% complete.
- The Comprehensive Plan was adopted by both the Chatham County Commissioners and the City of Savannah Mayor and Aldermen and was approved by both the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Coastal Georgia

CITIZEN'S HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

August 25, 2007
9am to 2pm
Savannah Civic Center

This program is open to all citizens and will provide the basic tools needed to equip participants to ensure their own safety and reduce the number of victims following the landfall of a hurricane in our area. Participants will be escorted through a series of 15-minute training sessions that will include:

1. Hurricane awareness - threat and vulnerability
2. Home Preparedness - securing your home and preparing supplies for both "shelter in place" and evacuation
3. Evacuation - private vehicle evacuation as well as accessing public transportation. Included in this segment will be public shelter operations and expectations.
4. Reentry - safety and health issues as well as insurance and assistance concerns

Expected participants include: American Red Cross, Atlanta Gas, Salvation Army, Humane Society, Savannah Leisure Services, LEPC, Savannah Fire Dept., CEMA, SCMPD, DFACS, Georgia DOT, Georgia Insurance Commission, GEMA, FEMA, Chatham Area Transit, Georgia Power, Savannah Public Information and Chatham County Public Information

NEW RECYCLING OPTIONS FOR COUNTY RESIDENTS

Chatham County residents now have more options for recycling their household products. The Wilmington Island Drop off Center, located at 7022 Concord Rd, now accepts #1 and #2 Plastics and Cardboard. David Nash, Environmental Coordinator, says "It is easy for residents to drive by, drop off their recycling, and have an attendant help them". Hours of operation for the Wilmington Island Drop Off Recycling Center are from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm.

Plastics include clear plastic containers (soda bottles, water bottles, juice bottles, etc.) and milk containers. Just loosen the lids so they are easy to

compact. Cardboard boxes need to be flattened before being placed in the compactors. Once a compactor is filled the products are taken to a recycling center and used for paper stock.

The Wilmington Island Drop Off Recycling center also accepts scrape metal, aluminum cans, newspaper, magazines, tin cans, office paper and carpet. The County also has mulch that residents can use for their landscaping needs. The mulch is available at the following sites: Wilmington Island, Chevis Rd, Sharon Park and Thomas Ave. For more information contact the Chatham County Environmental Office at 652-6856 or danash@chathamcounty.org.



CHATHAM COUNTY 4-H NEWS

Chatham County 4-H is taking advantage of the summer to prepare for upcoming 4-H events. School will be starting in September and this is the perfect time to be a part of a 4-H community club. Adults..... why not consider forming a 4-H community club in your neighborhood? County Extension personnel are available to provide the information to assist you in launching a 4-H community club in your neighborhood..

Chatham County Cooperative Extension is already hard at work



preparing 4-H entries for the 2007 Coastal Empire Fair. Join us this summer as students create their own Chatham County 4-H project to showcase in this year's competition. With so much going on, we know everyone will enjoy being a part of 4-H, the world's largest youth organization. To learn more about 4-H activities and clubs for the children in Chatham County, contact the Chatham County Cooperative Extension at 912-652-7981 or visit www.georgia4h.org or www.ugaextension.com/chatham

CHATHAM COUNTY'S FLOOD MITIGATION PLAN

Chatham County is hosting a Public Information Meeting to present the County's Flood Mitigation Plan and your attendance is requested. The Flood Mitigation Plan is required by FEMA in order to qualify Unincorporated Chatham County residents for the purchase of flood insurance policies. We are requesting input from the general public on the plans development. The DRAFT Plan can be reviewed from the Chatham County web page at www.chatham-county.org The Plan will be available for viewing on the web for the entire month of July 2007. The Appendixes mentioned in the Plan can viewed by visiting

the Chatham County Department of Engineering or by attending the upcoming Public Information meeting. The Public Information Meeting is scheduled for August 9, 2007 at 6:00 PM in the Author Mendonsa Hearing Room of the Metropolitan Planning Commission located at 112 East State Street, Savannah, Georgia 31401. This forum provides an opportunity to express your Unincorporated Chatham County related drainage and flooding concerns. Questions about the meeting should be addressed to the Community Rating System (CRS) Program Manager, Michael Blakely at (912) 652-7814.

Chairman, continued from pg 1

of what is being said about the work being done here, "Progress (in Chatham County) is thanks in large part to experienced county leadership that relies on intergovernmental partnerships, solid planning and progressive initiatives to meet infrastructure demands, accommodate growth and solve problems in the community. Chatham County leaders have made great accomplishments in recent years - partnering with municipal governments, facilitating new high-tech businesses and growing innovative programs for youth and the impoverished."

The following is just a few examples of what we've done:

- From the financial mess we inherited in 2005, Chatham County is in its best shape in 40 years. Our bond rating is double a plus.

- We've amassed \$4.5 million in the M&O and \$2.5 million in the SSD to devote to needed and long-unfunded capital improvements.

- We conducted another successful SPLOST campaign which will fund \$445 million of capital improvements.

- Intergovernmental relations are at an all-time high. Regular meetings with local elected officials have and will continue; to the benefit of everyone.

- Our "Step Up Savannah" anti-poverty initiative received the 2007 ACCG-Georgia Trend Magazine Excellence Award; an example of a public/private partnership working for our people.

- We constructed a temporary 300 bed jail addition to meet an alarming overcrowding problem. The planning is underway for a new 800 bed jail.

- We have reinforced our commitment to the Metropolitan Police Department and stand united with City of Savannah to fight crime.

- We have dedicated a state-of-the-art counter narcotics team headquarters and welcomed new CNT command.

- Our disaster preparedness is continually improving and we have expanded our warning siren system.

- We have completed \$10 million in capital improvements in virtually every area of county facilities, many of which had not been touched in years, if ever.

- Recreation areas that desperately needed major improvements and restoration have been a priority. Every tennis court in the county was resurfaced; many for the first time. Improvements are currently being

made to the Aquatic Center. Boat ramps are being improved & parks are being revived. The list goes on.

- We've also improved, and in some instances relocated, county offices and service facilities so that our citizens can gain better access to them. Employees now have adequate and up-to-date work environment to do better their jobs.

- We have adopted an ordinance to authorize creation of enterprise zones which encourage redevelopment of distressed areas. In the first enterprise zone, the President Street corridor, Georgia Pacific has already committed 400 construction jobs and some 90 permanent jobs with a goal that 10% of them would be targeted toward low-income families.

- The county added more than 250 acres in *Greenspace* during the year and also began a process to acquire more than 1,000 acres during 2007.

- We obtained a \$1 million grant for a 6.5-mile trail which will link Daffin Park to Lake Mayer.

- Upgrades and improvements were made in wastewater treatment, lift stations and water systems.

- We have resurfaced over five miles of county roads with the help of local assistance road program (LARP).

- We seated our first Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission.

- After 20 plus years, Chatham County citizens will soon see the start of a brand new library. The W.W. Law branch is in the final stages of a complete renovation with a projected opening later this year.

- We continue our partnership with *Read it Loud!* Savannah which is an initiative to communicate the importance and benefits of reading aloud to children; especially from birth through age five.

This partial list of accomplishments speaks volumes to the excellent work of our county manager and of every single member of our county work force. There is a "can do" spirit in the offices in the courthouse and elsewhere. Creative management and innovative problem-solving is now the norm.

Our elected managers and jurists have demonstrated a desire to provide the best service for our citizens, and for this, we are all very grateful.

It is a privilege to work with you all, together, to do the people's work. Thank you.

CHATHAM COUNTY YOUTH COMMISSION ANNOUNCES GRADUATES AND AWARD WINNERS!!!

On Friday, June 11, 2007, during the Chatham County Commission Meeting, Van R. Johnson, II and the Chatham County Youth Commission presented their 2007 graduates and the recipients of the 2007 Beverly M. Whitehead Award and the 2007 Brandon Brown Award.

THE GRADUATES ARE:

Katherine Blackburn	Savannah Country Day	George Mason University
Danielle Cummings	Jenkins High School	Mercer University
N'Gia Conyers	Johnson High School	Albany State University
Arnecia Newton	Jenkins High School	Savannah State University
Leslie Weaver	Jenkins High School	Fort Valley University
Roderick Bobbitt	Beach High School	Clafin University
Breonna Frazier	St. Paul Acad. for Girls	Johnson & Wales University
Jasmine Gusby	Jenkins High School	Sav. College of Art & Design
Whitney Hawthorne	Beach High School	Albany State University
Erica Scott	Windsor Forest H.S.	Breanau University
Kirsten Smith	Johnson High School	Shaw University

The Youth Commission also presented the 2007 Beverly M. Whitehead Award, in memory of the former Chatham County Human Resources Director. This award is presented to individuals in the community who have demonstrated excellence and commitment to youth in this community. This year's recipients are:

State Senator Regina Thomas Sheriff Al St. Lawrence

The Brandon Brown Youth Commission of the Year Award was presented to Shera Franklin, a Youth Commissioner at Savannah Arts Academy and Vice Chair-Elect.

For more information regarding the Youth Commission, please go to www.ChathamYouth.com.

READ IT LOUD! SAVANNAH'S SUMMER READING TIPS

1. Set aside a specific time every day for reading. Sticking to an established reading time in your home becomes a routine that your whole family will enjoy. Read to infants and preschoolers for 10-20 minutes at a sitting – that's long enough to read one or two picture books. School-age children should be reading a minimum of 20-30 minutes each day. For more reading tips, check readitloudsavannah.org.

2. Reward independent readers for good reading habits. For example, try awarding 30 minutes of television or video game time only after 30 minutes of daily reading time.

3. Make a commitment to give books as gifts. You may be surprised how much children love to receive their very own copy of a great book. (See tip number 4.) Books also make excellent gifts for new mothers. Baby Read-Aloud Basics, by Caroline J. Blakemore and Barbara Weston Ramirez, is a great source of detailed information for new mothers about the importance of reading aloud to babies – and it offers specific strategies for doing it effectively.

4. Use the Internet – informational sites such as about.com, as well as retail sites from commercial book sellers – to get book recommendations sorted by topic, age or reading level. You never know when or where you might discover a new gem or a forgotten classic that will become a child's favorite book.

5. If you don't already have a library card, get one.

6. Check your school-age child's recommended school reading lists now. If you are not sure what your child should read during the summer, check Savannah-Chatham Public Schools reading lists on the Live Oak Public Libraries Web site at liveoakpl.org.

7. Most books on summer reading lists for SCCPSS students are available at Live Oak Public Libraries branches. You can check availability online at liveoakpl.org. With your library card number and PIN (ask your local branch for details), you can hold books for pickup when they become available.

8. Help your children enroll in the Live Oak Public Libraries Vacation Reading Program, running now through

August 17. In addition to awarding prizes for reading, library branches are offering fun programs and activities throughout the summer. Check liveoakpl.org or your local branch for dates and times of special programs.

9. Choose one topic of interest with your child and explore it in depth through books as well as hands-on activities. If your child likes the beach, you can choose from dozens of age-appropriate fiction and non-fiction books on the topic – from shells and sandcastles to flotsam and jetsam. Do not hesitate to ask your children's librarian at your local library branch if you need recommendations. Then on your next trip to Tybee you can try to identify some of the shells you collect or build an amazing sandcastle you saw in a book.

10. Mark your calendars for Read It Loud! Savannah's "Storybook Summer" event scheduled for Sunday, August 19, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the shade of the Daffin Park mall. In addition to family-oriented stage entertainment from Wally Amos and other performers, the event will offer children the opportunity exploring popular children's books through activities, crafts and games.



CHATHAM COUNTY - SAVANNAH
METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
 110 EAST STATE STREET, P.O. BOX 8246, SAVANNAH GEORGIA 31412 - 8246

In 2005, the Chatham County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) celebrated its 50th anniversary. The MPC is one of the first agencies in the state to provide zoning and planning support to local governments and property owners. This experience is now applied to Historic Preservation, Natural Resources, Transportation and a host of related activities designed to enhance life in the Coastal Empire.

Listed below are several notable accomplishments during the last year at the MPC:

The **Comprehensive Plan** was adopted by both the Chatham County Board of Commissioners and the Mayor and

Aldermen of the City of Savannah. The Plan was also approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center. The Comprehensive Plan is an ongoing planning process that reflects a community's vision of itself and includes policies regarding land use, economic development, the environment, housing, cultural and historic resources, and transportation.

The **Wireless Telecommunications Ordinance**, designed to regulate the number and type of wireless telecommunication transmitters, has been adopted by both the Chatham County Board of Commissioners and the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of

Savannah. The Ordinance strives to balance the needs of the wireless industry and the desires of the community, particularly residential neighborhood.

The **MPC Citizens Planning Academy** was developed so that our residents would have an opportunity to know more about the important role that each person has in planning the future of the community. Our first class of 45 will graduate in early July. A new class will be forming in late August – watch for newspaper advertisements and our web site for how to register!

The first **Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC)** was appointed and seated after MPC staff wrote the enabling legislation and prepared the necessary documentation. Recently, the New Ogeechee Missionary Baptist Church became the first property to receive designation on the Chatham County Register of Historic Places.

County residents will see the start of a brand new library.

• After much anticipation, our W.W. Law branch is in the final stages of a complete renovation with a projected opening date of April 2007. The completed renovation will include an additional 300 square feet more than the previous building.

• Live Oak Public Libraries, Armstrong Atlantic University Zeta Phi Beta sorority and the 18th Annual Black Heritage Festival partnered to conduct the "Big READ Savannah" from February through April 2007. AASU was awarded a \$20,000 grant from the National

Earth Day is a major event for the MPC staff. Our Natural Resource planners have taken the lead in coordinating a diverse group of activities for this annual event. Staff is always eager to educate and inform the public about ways to help our environment.

The **Tax Incentive Workshop for Energy Efficient Buildings** is just one of the many workshops sponsored by MPC to keep the public and industry professionals informed about ways to conserve resources, improve the environment and, hopefully, save a little green by being "green"!

The **Context Sensitive Design Manual** was prepared by MPC to provide design standards for road plans in Chatham County. Context Sensitive Design promotes flexibility in the application of transportation design standards. Its objective is to keep community values foremost and to promote community ownership of the best possible solution

Endowment for the Arts to promote community-wide reading within the Savannah area. Copies of the novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston were distributed to local officials, schools and local book clubs. The kick-off was held at the Black Heritage Festival, with the finale scheduled in Daffin Park. Supporting adult and children's programs were held at AASU and various library branches, focusing on Zora Neale Hurston and her life and times.

• We continue our partnership with Read It Loud! Savannah which is an initiative to communicate the importance and benefits of reading aloud to

to mobility needs. The goal of the process is to design a facility that is safe and efficient for all users, regardless of their mode of travel. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (the transportation planning board) recently received an award from the Pedestrian Advocates of the Coastal Empire for adopting a Context Sensitive Design approach to future roadway design.

The **Savannah Area Geographic Information System (SAGIS)**, now a department of the MPC, coordinates information produced by the various governments in the area to provide useful, accurate information. In the past SAGIS has been known for its innovation and leading edge applications. We fully expect for that tradition to continue. Look for more information at www.SAGIS.org.

To learn more about these topics or other activities at the MPC, please visit our website www.thempc.org.

children, especially from birth through age five. Read It Loud! Savannah is the result of literacy activist Wally Amos and his Chip and Cookie Foundation's ongoing effort to spread this vital message to parents and caregivers.

• Received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (G.F.O.A.) for fiscal year July 1, 2006, to June 30, 2007- 19th year of award

• Received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from G.F.O.A. - 22nd year of award

Accomplishments continued from pg 2

Regional Development Center

• Seated the first Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission

• Health Department continues oversight of the County's indigent care funding through the Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council.

• In an effort to encourage reading over the winter holidays, the Library mascot TWIGS helped us usher in our first official Winter Reading program, in which over 1,500 children read a total of 4,000 books during the month of December.

• Georgia's annual statewide Summer Reading Program continues to be one of our most popular and well attended programming events for families. During summer 2006, over 6,500 children and teens signed up to read during the summer and attended over 350 various programs.

• We added a great service to the Library website called "Read the Books" to help students find books on their school reading lists in our online catalog. Simply click on the colorful button associated with their school and the reading list appears with a link which leads directly into our catalog.

• After 20 plus years, Chatham