

# CHATHAM COUNTY CONNECTION



July 2010



**Pete Liakakis**  
Chairman



**Helen L. Stone**  
District 1



**James J. Holmes**  
District 2



**Patrick Shay**  
District 3



**Patrick K. Farrell**  
District 4



**Harris Odell, Jr.**  
District 5



**David M. Gellatly**  
District 6



**Dean Kicklighter**  
District 7  
Chairman Pro Tem



**Dr. Priscilla D. Thomas**  
District 8 Vice Chairman

## Message from the Chairman



**Pete Liakakis**

### 2010 State of the County Address

Members of the County Commission, Other Elected Officials, Public Servants, Ladies and Gentlemen:

A bias for action with its focus on improving the lives of all Chatham County citizens. So describes a legacy in the making for a County Commission who has worked together going on six years. We've made representative democracy work while not succumbing to embittered and divisive conduct that impedes getting the job done. And the job is getting done! Our community is safer and on track for economic rebound.

Last August Moody's Investor Services upgraded the County's bond rating from A1 to Aa3 with a stable outlook. In their report, Moody's said that the "upgrade to Aa3 reflects the county's multi-year record of strong financial performance and recently improved reserves supported by strong management practices."

Crime is down. In 2009 the Counter Narcotics Team seized over \$1.2 million worth of drugs, 114 firearms, \$218,000 in currency and 21 vehicles.

On December 8, 2009, more than thirty defendants were sentenced in Federal Court in reference to a joint Title III investigation involving DEA and CNT. This was a long term investigation that required all of Investigations and an entire Tactical Team utilized for surveillance and monitoring. The sentences ranged from 260 months to 96 months for the various defendants.

As a result of CNT investigations, three drug kingpins pled guilty in Superior Court and re-

ceived a sentence of 25 years to serve; one defendant received an additional \$200,000 fine.

The Metropolitan Police Department is fully staffed while adding 5 officers focusing on juvenile offenders.

Superior Court has established a Mental Health Court currently involving 27 participants. It is estimated that this court has saved millions of dollars in incarceration and hospitalization costs over the last several years.

The Drug Court averages 79 active participants per month. 92% of the participants completing the Drug Court remain drug free. In 2009 over \$1.5 million were avoided in incarceration costs.

Through State Court, the DUI Court has 138 new participants while already graduating 89.

The Sheriff's Department and Mosquito Control, along with CEMA, are implementing Project Lifesaver. The program was initiated by County employee students in the 2008/2009 University of Georgia, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, Management Development Program. Project Lifesaver assists individuals affected by dementia, autism, and other disorders that cause them to wander and get lost. Electronic wristbands, that emit locating signals, are worn by affected individuals to help find them as quickly as possible once they are reported missing. Chatham County aircraft are used to reduce the time required to find missing persons. Mosquito Control aviation staff has begun training individuals in Bryan and Effingham Counties to help establish the program in outlying areas.

At the same time we're safer, we're also putting resources to make this a healthier place to live.

We've been recognized at the state level by receiving a "County of Excellence" designation through Georgia Trend magazine because of the Safety Net Planning Council.

The Safety Net Planning Council has received the Joseph D. Greene Award for "Collaborative of the Year" by the Healthcare Georgia Foundation.

Safety Net has increased the number of patients served by 43% over the last four years. Just a few weeks ago it launched the Health Information Exchange between major providers in our area. Resources are going to those in need and duplication is minimized. Preliminary reports from 2009 indicate that the Safety Net provider network has achieved the milestone of providing 100,000 patient visits through the system.

Chatham County completed its first comprehensive Health Risk Assessment (HRA) for all County employees covered under the health insurance program. This was accomplished in conjunction with OurLife and St. Joseph's/Candler Health Systems. Approximately 1,100 employees (82%) completed the HRA process. Employees who completed the HRA received a premium discount.

We've issued a tobacco use surcharge for our employees who are covered under the health insurance program.

Chatham County designed and funded its first ever contribution to a Retirement Health Savings Plan for active employees. This program is established to accumulate assets to reimburse for medical expenses in retirement on a tax free basis.

Economically our future is bright.

The Board has approved an application for Georgia Biomass to become a qualifying business within Enterprise Zone 1. The \$10 million project will construct a state-of-the-art storage and loading facility for sustainable fuel pellets, which are exported to Europe. The company agreed to work with our Apprentice Program to employ at least 10% of its new workforce through a training program aimed at providing job skills to those from households in poverty.

We obtained an environmental permit for the Slip 3 Riverwalk project on Hutchinson Island and assisted the Trade Center Authority in construction administration of the \$8 million project.

In partnership with the Georgia Department of Transportation, construction started on Phase V

of the Truman Parkway which is now creating millions of dollars worth of jobs in our area.

Completed the Courthouse Project Phase 1, an \$8 million project, which includes a new sallyport in the first floor of the adjoining Chatham County Parking Garage for secure inmate transfer, two new tunnel connectors, holding capacity for 190 inmates and new offices for the Sheriff's Offices Court Services Division. The project provides improved efficiency for court appearances for inmates and increased security since the number of inmate transfers from holding areas to court can be minimized and restricted with the latest in technological innovation. The completed project also removes the need for the former jail on Montgomery Street, and the site can be reserved for future expansion of much-needed space for the judiciary. The project also demonstrated Chatham County's commitment to its local construction companies. Under Phase 1A, the tunnel connectors, the County introduced Best Value Contracting to obtain the services of TIC-The Industrial Company, in partnership with Harbor Construction, to achieve 100% local construction, 38% minority participation and a local work force rate of 90%.

Acquired 222 West Oglethorpe Avenue, known as the Commerce Building, in lieu of a plan to renovate the old jail on Montgomery Street into an office building. The five-story building totals 69,597 square feet, but more importantly, it remains the largest office building within the closest proximity of the Courthouse. Not using the old jail site will enable future construction at the Courthouse campus to meet longer-term needs for the judiciary and maintain all courts at the same location.

We're scheduled to open a new animal shelter and records center in the summer of this year.

Last year we began to celebrate our journey to become the greenest county in Georgia.

Chatham County is committed to becoming the greenest County in Georgia and staff will be documenting progress toward

reaching that goal. Future comparisons will be made using 2007 as our benchmark year. Overall energy consumption will likely increase as new buildings are acquired and new construction is completed in the near future, but the implementation of aggressive conservation measures should allow a reduction in operating costs per square foot of building space. During calendar year 2010 a net increase of 61,148 square feet of building space will be added to the county's infrastructure. Longer range proposals include acquisition of a biodiesel plant, expansion of greenway trails, initiating green jobs training programs, continued purchase of hybrid and more fuel efficient vehicles, resource recycling, and a directed effort to complete the action items in the Chatham Environmental Forum's document, "A Road Map for Chatham County for Its Journey in Becoming the Greenest County in the State of Georgia."

By 2011, County-wide energy savings are projected to total \$331,634 for buildings that existed in 2007. Our first steps in becoming the "greenest county" are well underway. Chatham County's Green Team qualified for a Georgia Department of Natural Resources bronze level Partnership for Sustainable Georgia. Chatham County was awarded a \$300,000 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant, and these funds will be used to achieve the projected 15% decrease in energy costs for buildings and facilities that were owned in 2007. Operating costs per square foot should decline in 2011 in spite of adding a net increase of 61,148 square feet of additional space to the county inventory compared with 2007.

The Southwest Branch Library opened on October 20, 2009, occupying 50,000 square feet and becoming the first government LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver certified facility in Chatham County. Pre-completion energy models projected energy consumption 30% below the 60,000 square foot Bull Street Library. From July 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010, actual energy consumption

at the Southwest Branch Library was 49% less than Bull Street, yielding an additional savings of nearly 20% over early estimates.

The Chatham Transit Authority purchased 20 hybrid vehicles, including 13 buses and 7 paratransit vans.

Chatham County will easily meet its 2010 commitment to plant 365 trees per year with the planting of 7,000 trees in the Litchfield Tract and 550 trees at the Westlake-Lamarville Reforestation Project.

What I have enumerated serves as but a sampling of what elected officials and professional staff are doing for the betterment of the citizens we serve. Each Commissioner must be recognized as integral to an exceptional group of elected officials. They continue to contribute as individuals and collectively to this legacy of "a bias for action" that makes Chatham County a better place in which to live. Regardless of the challenges, the genuine worth of this County Commission and the quality of our workforce is an unbeatable combination.

A few months ago Police Chief Lovett was addressing a group of newly sworn members of the Police Department. I'm taking the liberty of using his comments because of their application to all of us. It serves as my prayer:

*Take time to think*  
... It is the source of power  
*Take time to play*  
... It is the secret of perpetual youth  
*Take time to read*  
... It is the fountain of wisdom  
*Take time to be friendly*  
... It is the road to happiness  
*Take time to laugh*  
... It is the music of the soul  
*Take time to give*  
... It is the price of success  
*Take time to love and be loved*  
... It is the greatest power on earth

May you all be blessed, and may Chatham County continue to prosper.

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

(Savannah, GA) On Friday, June 11, 2010, during the Chatham County Commission Meeting, the Chatham County Youth Commission will presented their 2010 graduates, the recipient of the 2010 Beverly M. Whitehead Award and the recipient of the Brandon Brown Youth Commissioner of the Year Award.

The Youth Commission also presented the 2010 Beverly M. Whitehead Award, in memory of the former Chatham County Human Resources Director. This award is presented to individuals, businesses and agencies in the community who have demonstrated excellence and commitment to youth in this community. The award was presented to Cheryl Branch of SAFE Shelter.

The Youth Commission also presented the 2010 Brandon Brown Youth Commissioner of the Year Award to Youth Commissioner Lester Foster.

The Graduates are:

### NAME

Tilly Isaacson  
Meredith Stone  
Alexis Slay  
Brittany Bell  
Shanee' Ferguson  
Lester Foster  
Takneijah Green  
Desmond Griffith  
Kenjahte' Harrison  
Cindy Lee  
Korbyn Mingledorf  
Malikah Mobley  
Jazmine Paige

### SCHOOL

Savannah Arts Academy  
Johnson High School  
Johnson High School  
Jenkins  
Jenkins  
Groves  
Bible Baptist  
Bethesda School  
Johnson  
Calvary  
Early College  
Jenkins  
Windsor Forest

### COLLEGE

Culinary Institute of America  
Hampton University  
North Carolina Central University  
Clark Atlanta University  
Savannah State University  
Savannah State University  
Georgia Gwinnett College  
Valdosta State University  
Georgia Southern University  
College of Charleston  
Savannah State University  
Albany State University  
Gordon College

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INNOVATIONS

- Using complex software, staff calculated that in 2007, Chatham County operations released the equivalent of 21,091 tons of carbon dioxide at a cost of \$6,044,935 for all types of consumed energy. This baseline year calculation will be used as a benchmark to track our progress in becoming the “greenest county in Georgia.”
- County departments and staff reviewed the Chatham Environmental Forum’s document, “A Road Map for Chatham County for Its Journey in Becoming the Greenest County in the State of Georgia” and began planning and budgeting to complete applicable action items in the “greenest county” plan.
- The Georgia Department of Natural Resources accepted Chatham County’s application for a bronze level partnership in Sustainable Georgia. Actions required to achieve this distinction should reduce energy consumption by 15% in 2010, saving the county \$331,634.
- Chatham County received a \$300,000 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant to implement its first year energy conservation program and achieve a 15% reduction in energy consumption. \$210,000 will be used for identified energy reduction projects, and 25% of the resulting savings will be used to fund a “green” jobs program through Step Up Savannah. \$15,000 will be used to develop and in-house recycling program and \$75,000 will be used for a community-wide climate change assessment in cooperation with the Chatham Environmental Forum.
- For the first time, Capital Improvement Program requests that support the initiatives of Chatham County’s “greenest county” plan were awarded 35 environmental policy points, elevating their ranking in the competitive CIP funding process.
- The Chatham Transit Authority purchased 20 hybrid vehicles, including 13 buses and 7 paratransit vans.
- Chatham County departments are aggressively pursuing an in-house recycling program, the purchase of Energy Star appliances, and the purchase of products with recycled components.
- The Resource Conservation Center on Eisenhower Drive has developed into a superior demonstration project for green initiatives showcasing LED lighting, a solar water heater, bamboo floors, and pole barn constructed of recycled materials.
- Chatham County will easily meet its 2010 commitment to plant 365 trees per year with the planting of 7,000 trees in the Litchfield Tract and 550 trees at the Westlake-Lamarville Reforestation Project.
- Chatham County received Certified Local Government status, as per the National Historic Preservation Act, on September 30, 2009.
- The Chatham County Resource Protection Commission adopted the Site Acquisition Policy which details the steps that must be followed to protect a site.

### Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) achievements:

- Completed the draft of the Unified Zoning Ordinance.
- Created a draft Hutchinson Island Master Plan.
- Built a tracking tool for the Master Address Database.

### Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) achievements:

- Developed the following : Transportation Assets Management Plan, Search & Rescue Coordination Plan, Re-Entry Coordination Plan, Animals in Disasters Coordination Plan, worked with partners on Port Infectious Disease Plan, Special Needs Plan update, Critical Workforce Re-Entry Coordination Plan, Defense Support to Civil Authorities Plan, Base Camp Coordination Plan, Animals in Disasters Procedures/Annex (UGA/State) Plan, EOC Staff Manual, Transportation and Sheltering Plan, Safe Room Operations Plan, updated the Disaster Recovery Plan, Points of Distribution Plan, Logistical Support Area Coordination Plan, Logistics Plan, Evacuation Area Assembly Plan Development, and Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Activated Emergency Operations Center for more than 40 events and 67 training days.
- Deployed staff to Paulding and DeKalb Counties for flood relief operations.
- Initiated a Savannah State University intern program.
- Installed 33 New Sirens throughout the County for a total

- of 60 sirens.
- Coordinated with Homeless Authority concerning cold weather shelters.
- Conducted more than 100 community presentations for >1,200 Chatham County residents in hurricane planning, response and recovery.

### Public Works and Park Services achievements:

- Constructed new enclosed pavilion at Lake Mayer.
- Installed erosion control oyster bags to stabilize the slopes of McQueen’s Trail.
- Hired consultant to design expansion of the Tom Triplett Community Park.
- Hired consultant to design expansion of the Charlie Brooks Sports Complex.
- Hired consultant to design extension of the Truman Linear Trail.
- Hired consultant to evaluate Memorial Stadium structural components.
- Stabilized erosion with large stone at the Salt Creek Boat Ramp with in-house forces.
- Upgraded fields 2 and 4 at Jim Golden Complex at Stell Park.
- Replaced restrooms at Kings Ferry Boat Ramp and Park.
- Installed new playground equipment at Turner-Hodge-Young Park.
- Installed new playground equipment at Runaway Point Park.
- Developed a Holiday Kids Camp at Lake Mayer Community Center.
- Hosted the first annual Fishing Tournament at Tybee Island Pier and Pavilion.
- Added a 4 and Under Flag Football age.
- Hosted 16 swim meets that included a State meet and 5 college level meets.
- Hosted 7 weightlifting competitions and hosted training for the Canadian Team.
- Developed a curriculum to teach water safety in the public school system.
- Created a new advanced BABY swim class.
- Received a 4 Star audit review for lifeguarding by the national group Starfish Aquatics.
- Provided Incident Management training to all staff to meet FEMA requirements.
- Resurfaced eight roads with CIP funds.
- Repaired approximately 1,000 lineal feet of sidewalk in Lions Gate Subdivision.
- Acquired used truck from the City of Savannah and equipped it with new equipment to provide video of closed conduit water and wastewater systems.
- Opened the Resource Conservation Education Center for recycling opportunities on Eisenhower Drive at the former location of Mosquito Control.
- Implemented Pavement Management Software System.
- Developed asset management inventory of Park facilities with SSU intern.

### Probate Court achievements:

- Probate Court is beginning to charge a fee for contested hearings (legislation has been set up) for hearings held half a day and for the entire day.
- Probate Court is very pleased with the amount of cases that are being sent to mediation for settlement and the results that are being reached.

### Recorder’s Court achievements:

- Began offering two new payment options for customer convenience: Online payment of traffic fines and fees, via www.SavannahGa.Gov as well as the acceptance of credit card and debit card payments at the cashiering windows of Recorder’s Court.
- Installed video conferencing equipment in Courtroom B of Recorder’s Court, thereby eliminating the need to have Chatham County Sheriff’s Department deputies to transport inmates from the Detention Center for arraignment and probation revocation hearings in the Chatham County Courthouse.

### Engineering Department achievements:

- Truman Parkway Phase 5. Construction contract awarded January 29, 2010.
- Whitefield Avenue (Old Whitefield to Hayner’s Creek Bridge). Right of Way acquisitions should be complete by May 2010. Will be construction ready by end of 2010.
- Jimmy DeLoach Parkway, Phase 2. Under design.
- Jimmy DeLoach/US 80 Interchange. Under design. Skidaway Road improvements from Ferguson to Rowland Avenue. Repurposing corridor to complete street model.

- Bay Street, I-516 to Viaduct. Environmental Assessment approved. ROW plans approved.
- Resurfaced 2.39 miles of County roads with Local Assistance Road Program (LARP).
- State Park Road/Diamond Causeway intersection improvements completed.
- Construction completed on Brandy Road, Betran Avenue and Bond Avenue.
- Construction of Pyeland Avenue, Catherine Street and Adeline Street to be completed by spring 2010.
- The process (analyses, design, permitting, ROW acquisition, construction) to improve twenty drainage systems for the 1998-2003 SPLOST, and five drainage systems for the 2003-2008 SPLOST were well underway.
- Completed construction of the Dundee Canal Tidegates improvement project, the Wilmington Park Canal erosion protection project, construction of upgrades to the Chevis Canal culverts at Hodges project, the Little Neck Road Culvert Replacement project, the Beaulieu Avenue Culvert project, a small site preparation project as part of the Pipemakers Canal Drainage Improvement project, and the Kings Way Canal drainage improvement project.
- Completed design and placed under construction the SR307/Hardin Canal drainage improvement project, the Hardin Canal Golf Cart Bridge replacement project, the Belleview Drive drainage improvement project, the Louis Mills/Redgate Canal drainage improvement project, the Quacco Canal/Regency drainage improvement project, and the Ogeechee Farms culvert (5 culverts) replacement project.
- Construction of first phase of Hardin Canal Widening Project underway.
- Responded to 264 requests for flood zone determinations so far in FY 2010. The availability of flood zone information on the County web site and on SAGIS.org continues to decrease the number of requests sent directly to staff. With the adoption of the new digital flood hazard maps as of 2008, however, flood zone requests of staff personnel increased significantly.
- On October 1, 2009, Chatham County’s Community Rating System (CRS) increased to Classification 6. Therefore, 12,990 flood insurance policy holders in the special flood hazard areas (AE and VE zones) received a 20% discount on their policy cost. That equates to savings totaling \$2,001,655 each year on flood insurance premiums (average of \$154 per policy holder). An average \$90 savings or 10% discount is afforded to policy holders located in low flood hazard areas (X zones).
- Stormwater Inventory of publicly maintained drainage system is 90% complete. Staff began inventory of privately maintained systems.
- Wetlands enhancement and restoration requirements completed (270 credits released thus far). Credits used for eight County projects. Wetlands creation continues with 20 acres planted and reclaimed. Continuing coordination with Bamboo Farm and UGA to integrate the Bank into the Bamboo Farm Strategic Plan and into the Coastal Georgia Greenway.
- The design of the Chatham County Detention Facility by the architectural firm, L. Robert Kimball and Associates, was completed. The project includes about 333,000 square feet of new construction and renovation.

### Counter Narcotics Team achievements:

- In 2009, CNT received 593 drug complaints (from all sources: Hotline, Crime Stoppers, etc) and investigated 531. Of these complaints, 295 came from Crime Stoppers alone.
- In 2009, CNT undercover operations made 440 actual drug buys, and conducted 57 joint investigations compared to 40 joint investigations in 2008 with other agencies such as the GBI, NCIS, DEA, ATF, and US Customs (ICE).
- Seized over \$1.2 million worth of drugs, 114 firearms, \$217,751 in currency and 21 vehicles.
- Agents completed almost 2,002 hours of advance training and provided 1,018 hours in assistance to other agencies (non-drug investigation related training; drug awareness programs etc.).
- Starting October 9, 2009, the entire Major Case team was assigned to a joint investigation with ICE. As a result, CNT executed five search warrants simultaneously at correspond-

- ing locations on Florence Street, Oleander Avenue, Marian Circle, Earl Court, Wright Street and one on a vehicle. As a result of these search warrants, agents seized marijuana, ecstasy, four firearms, US currency, and other items used to package and distribute marijuana. Two of the main targets in this investigation have been indicted by the Federal Government (ICE) for conspiracy to distribute marijuana and Bank Fraud (all multiple counts). To date agents have seized over 60 pounds of marijuana and approximately \$17,000 in currency in reference to this case. Additional indictments are possible once all the evidence is processed.
- On December 8, 2009, approximately thirty three (33) defendants were sentenced in Federal Court in reference to a joint Title III investigation involving DEA and CNT. This was a long term investigation that required all of Investigations and an entire Tactical Team utilized for surveillance and monitoring. The sentences ranged from 260 months to 96 months for the various defendants.
- As a result of CNT investigation, three drug kingpins pled guilty in Superior Court and received a sentence of 25 years to serve; one defendant received an additional \$200,000 fine.
- Executed two search warrants after a year-long investigation of suspected manufacturing of marijuana. Around 850 plants were seized, two suspects were arrested and four weapons were seized.

### Juvenile Court achievements:

- Hosted the Deprivation Court Improvement Initiative Training Session
- Conducted 322 Judicial Citizen Review Panels
- Youth under the jurisdiction of Juvenile Court completed 3,808 hours of Community Service
- Disbursed \$44,727.24 in restitution to citizens
- 149 youth completed the Youth Educational Shoplifting Program (YES)
- 100 youth completed the Community Works Program
- Implemented the State’s first Juvenile Mental Health Court
- Upgraded courtroom security cameras and DVR
- Conducted 3 Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer training sessions
- Hosted the Court’s first community resource fair with over 38 agencies participating
- In 2009, Family Dependency Treatment Court (FDTC) served 23 families with 78 kids and 3 unborn children.
- In 2009, FDTC graduated 5 families with a total of 28 children and grandchildren affected by the parent’s continued sobriety.
- Juvenile Court officers made over 15,500 visits to Chatham County schools
- There were 109 successful mediations held in 2009
- Hosted 2 mock trials and a “mini mester” for local school children

### Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department (SCMPD) achievements:

- Achieved staffing of 607 sworn officers.
- Added 5 officers directed at juvenile offenders.
- Is pushing trained officers into the field. Currently 9 recruits in academy training versus 39 this time last year.
- Provided training for Command Staff in budget, Fair Labor & Standards.
- Decentralized overtime management, below target expenditures for overtime to date.
- All command staff trained and practiced in effective management of major incident scenes
- New Animal Control facility to be on line June 2010

### Superior Court achievements:

- Worked with Eastern Judicial Circuit departments and courts to successfully apply for Recovery Act funding in the amount of \$466,355, which will be used for the Data Exchange Program in the Circuit, for a truancy Intervention Program, and for case managers for the Specialty Court.
- Established the Mental Health Court, targeting adults seventeen years of age or older, who have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder, and who are charged with non-violent misdemeanor or felony offenses. The court receives referrals from the Chatham County Detention Center, the District Attorney, the

- Public Defender, Defense Counsel, and the Probation Office for a five phase treatment that lasts 24 months designed to stabilize the participant’s lifestyle. Mental Health Court celebrated the graduation of its first five graduates who successfully completed the program in 2009. Mental Health Court currently has 27 participants, and have screened 162 candidates, and 135 were denied access to the program. Mental Health Court was awarded \$200,000 in grant funding during 2009, and has saved the county \$657,954,000 in incarceration and hospitalization costs since 2007.
- Drug Court is a 24-month, intensive outpatient chemical dependency treatment program for non-violent criminal offenders to provide substance abuse treatment to criminal offenders who suffer an addiction to drugs and/or alcohol. Drug Court averages 79 active participants per month. Drug Court graduated 25 participants who successfully completed the program in 2009. 92% of participants completing the Drug Court Program remain drug free. Drug Court has saved Chatham County \$1,574,000 in costs for incarceration during 2009. Superior Court wrote and was awarded 2 grants totaling \$224,392 to help underwrite the costs of the Chatham County Drug Court.
- Utilized 2 video conferencing systems in 340 hearings to eliminate transport of defendants to the courthouse from the jail for certain hearings such as arraignments and extraditions.
- Court Services provided interpreters in 163 appointed cases in Superior Court during 2009, and processed 74 forensic applications during 2009.
- Superior Court Services Guardian Ad Litem Program is 100% funded through grants (\$41,000 in 2008/2009) and the program provided 46 guardians during 2007/2008.
- Superior Court Administrator’s Pro Se office conducts training on the child support guidelines and calculations for local attorneys and staff, and acts as a liaison between superior court and the local bar and community. (“Pro se” means self-representation without a lawyer.)
- The Pro Se office handles all inmate motions and correspondence in excess of one hundred documents per week.

### Clerk of Superior Court achievements:

- Began accepting electronic (e-filing) applications for new and renewal Notary Appointments through the Georgia Superior Court Clerks’ Cooperative Authority.
- Began accepting the e-filing of new Child Support Cases and supporting proceedings
- Began the electronic reporting of Drivers Citations to the Department of Motor Vehicles
- Added the years 1985 and 1986 to the Electronic Library of Real Estate Instruments already scanned for disaster recovery and public use. (The Clerk of Superior Court currently has 5,665,111 deed and related images in the electronic library.)

### State Court Clerk and State Court Judiciary achievements:

- Received 11,044 new filings in 2009. Civil filings totaled 5,274 and criminal filings totaled 5,910.
- Disposed 6,000 criminal cases and 4,901 civil cases.
- Between 01/01/09 and 12/31/09, Savannah-Chatham DUI Court received 138 new participants in the DUI Court program, conducted 974 home visits, performed 4,548 drug tests, and graduated 89 participants.
- Judiciary sentences individuals to perform community service work. In 2009, probationers satisfied approximately 52,697 hours of community service for various government and non-profit agencies. This is an increase of 10,202 more hours than in 2008.
- In cooperation with the District Attorney’s Office, implemented a special plea docket to bring to DUI Court cases to disposition sooner.

### Alternative Dispute Resolution achievements:

- Processed 1,338 cases, mediated 1,047 cases, came to full agreement in 654 cases with 8 cases in partial agreement, and 385 in impasse status. 284 cases were settled prior to mediation.
- Handles all Standing Orders Mandating Alternative Dispute Resolution for all contested domestic and civil matters prior to a request for a pretrial conference or a trial date.

- Provides civil and domestic training classes for people interested in becoming registered mediators within the state.

### ICS achievements:

- Incorporated the Sheriff’s Department to the county’s document imaging system.
- Started migration to a new desktop management package
- Began migration from GroupWise to Exchange (ongoing)
- Upgraded Virtualization infrastructure, UPS and power, routers, switches, Storage Area Network
- Supported Voter Registration and Elections Board through one of the busiest elections
- Upgraded voice mail to accommodate CEMA and WTOC joint voice mail notification
- Upgraded South side, Sheriff, Police telephone systems to 3300.

### Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council (CCSNPC) achievements:

- Electronic Medical Records: Two Providers completed the adoption of Electronic Medical Records (J. C. Lewis Health Center and Memorial University Medical Center Emergency Department), two Providers over 75% finished with the adoption of Electronic Medical Records (Community Health Mission and St. Mary’s Clinic), one Provider received Federal Stimulus Funding toward the adoption of Electronic Medical Records and is in the process of software selection (Curtis V. Cooper Primary Healthcare)
- Successful launch of the Health Information Exchange Pilot Project between J.C. Lewis Health Center and Memorial University Medical Center Emergency Department creating the first electronic Health Information Exchange in the state of Georgia
- Creation of a central database of secure patient health records managed by CCSNPC
- Increased the number of patients served in the Safety Net provider system by 43% in the four year period 2004-2008
- Preliminary reports from 2009 indicate that the Safety Net provider network has achieved the milestone of providing 100,000 patient visits throughout the system
- Created the first specialty care referral and tracking system, Chatham CAN (Creating Access Now), through a two year grant from the Healthcare Georgia Foundation
- Began a system wide program of colon cancer education, risk assessment and screening through ACT (Assess-Connect-Teach), through a grant from Southeast Georgia Cancer Alliance
- Chairman Pete Liakakis awarded the “Health Care Hero” award through the Georgia Medical Society in October 2009 for the creation and support of CCSNPC
- Chatham County named “County of Excellence” by Georgia Trend magazine in March 2010 for the improvements in health care through the work of the County Commission and the CCSNPC
- Received the Joseph D. Greene award for “Collaborative of the Year” by the Healthcare Georgia Foundation April 2010

### Mosquito Control achievements:

- Based on the demonstrated success of a new ditching protocol used to de-water the dredge material containment areas along the Savannah River, Mosquito Control purchased an amphibious excavator to fulfill a five-year goal and permit the new ditching technique to be used throughout the 5,000 acre spoil containment system. During the initial trial period, the ditching method saved \$4,500 per rain event by decreasing chemical applications for mosquito control.
- Earned \$71,000 in unanticipated revenue by completing a special ditching project for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that funded the project with federal stimulus dollars.
- Hosted the 35th annual meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Mosquito Control Association at the Hilton Savannah DeSoto in January 2010. The Mosquito Control Director serves as the 2010-2011 president of the association.
- Chief Pilot is serving the second of a two-year term as the president of the American Mosquito Control Pilots Association.
- Staff completed a community service project with seventeen advanced pharmacy students from South University. The students fulfilled a community service requirement by assisting county staff with a product efficacy test

of a new public health pesticide.

- Partnered with the Savannah Morning News to create a “Mosquito Forecast” graphic that was posted on the SavannahNOW website during the 2009 mosquito season. The graphic provides information on current mosquito nuisance conditions and mosquito-borne disease threat levels. The site proved to be very popular and well over 12,000 visits were recorded before the website counter was removed early in the season. Plans are to continue this service in 2010.

- Co-hosted the national meeting of the Airborne Law Enforcement Association at the Savannah International Trade and Convention Center in July 2009. Notably, staff coordinated the movement of aircraft for the event, including a dozen aircraft that were displayed inside the Trade Center.

- Teamed with the Sheriff’s Department to implement Project Lifesaver in Chatham County. The program was initiated by students in the 2008/2009 University of Georgia, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, Management Development Program. Project Lifesaver assists individuals affected by dementia, autism, and other disorders that cause them to wander and get lost. Electronic wristbands, that emit locating signals, are worn by affected individuals to help find them as quickly as possible once they are reported missing. Chatham County aircraft are used to reduce the time required to find missing persons. Mosquito Control aviation staff has begun training individuals in Bryan and Effingham Counties to help establish the program in outlying areas.

### CrimeStoppers achievements:

- Received the 2009 NACO Achievement Award for the CrimeStoppers Focus Program
- Focus programs can be viewed on CrimeStoppers website
- Focus programs can now be seen on iTunes
- Fugitive programs have expanded to Adventure Radio’s 106.9, and all six Clear Channel radio stations

- Expanded the CrimeStoppers Fugitives program to Q105.3
- Produced videos for law enforcement: Metro Police Department - 911 Communications Officer Recruitment Video ( in production), Metro Police Department - Just Make the Call (public service announcement), Savannah Impact Program - Re Entry Video (update)

### Live Oak Public Libraries achievements:

- The sixth annual Savannah Children’s Book Festival held on November 14, 2009, brought over 30,000 people of all ages to Forsyth Park to enjoy a multitude of local and national authors, illustrators, and performers to celebrate the joy of reading.
- Georgia’s annual statewide Summer Reading Program continues to be one of our most popular and well-attended programming events for families. During summer 2009, over 12,000 children and teens signed up to read during the summer and attended over 400 entertaining and educational programs.
- Our newest Library opened on October 20, 2009. This state-of-the-art facility on the south side of the County near Savannah Mall brought library services to an unserved area. Our 50,000 square foot facility is the first LEED certified county facility. During the first 6 months of operation, we have seen over 40% energy savings for a building of comparable size, proving that LEED construction delivers immediate and long-term operational savings. Technology has been leveraged to require a smaller staff than a traditional facility of similar size. Currently over 80% of materials are returned through our automated self-check in and more than 45% of items are checked out with our self-checkout technology. This new civic facility is a showcase for the county not only as a contemporary library but also as an excellent example of the benefits of LEED design.

- Opened on October 20, 2009, our new Southwest Library was an immediate hit! With over 100,000 new items purchased for the collections, circulation has been impressive; 25% of Live Oak Public Libraries FY10 circulation will come from our new library. More than 120 people walk through the doors every hour the library is open. Children’s story times regularly have attendance over 75 people. Class visits are so popular they must be booked

months in advance. The 200 seat auditorium is also a large draw with a range of groups utilizing this unique space on a daily basis; most months only have a day or two when the room is not being used. Thoughtful design ensures that the building is intuitive to first time visitors, easy to manage and staff, and a destination that everyone wants to return to again and again.

- On February 22, 2010, we opened another new facility, co-locating with the West Broad YMCA. Through this exciting new venture, we are able to offer the community a bright, airy facility that includes a 17 seat computer lab, story time area, and collections to meet the needs of area residents. Within the first weeks, our library has become a popular destination.

### Public Defender’s Office achievements:

- Increased coverage of felony cases to over 90%
- Maintained staff retention rate at approximately 90%
- Secured refund from state of nearly \$235,00 to use for payment of conflict appeals and trails to avoid inclusion in pending legal actions in Elbert and Fulton counties
- Secured Byrne grant funds to hire case manager/social worker to assist with mitigation, sentencing and re-entry of clients to reduce incarceration and recidivism rates
- Reduced annual budget request through planned relocation of office and attendant departmental cost reductions
- Reduced overall indigent defense costs to county by reducing both Public Defender and Panel Attorney department budgets.
- Secured authorization for Chatham County to retain application fees, attorneys’ fees and other fines collected through the Indigent Defense Fund by creating approved indigency verification system.
- Expanded staff at no budget increase to the county in order to enhance Early Intervention Program participation and appeals.
- Assisted Superior Court in reducing backlog and generating “positive” caseload totals for third straight year.

### County Attorney’s Office achievements:

- Increased the number of in rem petitions to place these properties back on the tax rolls. The estimated cumulative fair market value of these properties will be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. In addition, the County Attorney’s Office will be able to reimburse approximately \$8,000 in attorney’s fees.
- 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 in excess of one million dollars of taxes for the County.
- 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.
- Has been active, with considerable time required, during the Legislative Session in communication with the legislative delegation as to impacts of various tax reform measures.
- 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 and without the necessity of outsourcing work except to the extent of very specialized areas such as copyright, anti-trust, oil/land and gasoline matters.
- Has assisted the Savannah Chatham Metropolitan Police Department and the Chatham County Sheriff’s Department by filing approximately 75 to 100 applications with the Superior Court to obtain an order from the Judge to have the property sold, destroyed or retained.
- Has assisted the Chatham County Tax Commissioner’s Office in filing objections to individuals filing Year’s Support petitions.

### Public Information Office achievements:

- Designed branding logo for Celebration 2010.
- Produced oral history of World War II Mighty Eighth Veterans, In Their Own Words, for Channel 16.
- Created and maintains Chatham County Facebook page. Currently there are 1,329 fans of Chatham County, Georgia, on Facebook.
- Produced 30 second Stormwater Pollution Public Service Announcement for Engineering Department.
- Produced CrimeStoppers Focus: CNT one hour program for Channel 16.
- Provided publicity for the Marine Silent Drill Platoon resulted in attendance of over 2,000 for their performance at Savannah State University.
- Provided photography services for the production of Health Department’s 2010 Immunization & Preventative Health Calendar for Senior Citizens.
- Produces the quarterly newsletter Chatham County Connection for distribution in the Savannah Morning News.
- Began live streaming over the internal Chatham County Intranet of County Commission meetings.
- Produced video “Q&A” for the Sheriff’s Department website.

### Finance Department achievements:

- Received the Distinguished Budget Presentation award from the Government Finance Officers Association for the fiscal year July 1, 2009, to June 30, 2010.
- Received the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting award from the Government Finance Officers Association for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009.
- Prepared the 2010 Capital Improvement Plan workbook that consolidated departmental capital requests into one document. Over \$96 million in projects are listed in the workbook.
- Continued its work on documenting internal controls within the County’s functions. All county departments have been contacted and are involved in the process. This documentation is in accordance with recently issued Statements of Auditing Standards from the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.
- Implemented an additional feature to its fraud control program that verifies the payee name on all County checks.
- Implemented Red Flags Rules as required by the Federal Trade Commission. The policy’s intent is to prevent water and sewer customer identity theft. Customer information was centralized and secured as directed by the policy.
- In August 2009 Moody’s Investor Services upgraded the County’s bond rating to Aa3 from A1 with a stable outlook. In their report, Moody’s said that the “upgrade to Aa3 reflects the county’s multi-year record of strong financial performance and recently improved reserves supported by strong management practices”.
- In August 2009 the County issued bonds through the Downtown Savannah Authority for \$2.4 million to purchase 120 Fahm Street. The Union Mission entered into a lease for the property. Under the terms of the lease, Union Mission will be provided all rights of ownership except title as long as they continue to provide services and retain their 501(c) (3) status.
- To date, Workers Compensation reimbursements from the Subsequent Injury Trust Fund have exceeded \$500,000.

### Board of Elections achievements:

- Board of Elections conducted scheduled general municipal with unscheduled special election for State Senate and State House.
- Board of Elections conducted a municipal special election.
- Board of Elections reduced the number of active election-day polls to 89 by consolidating two polling places.
- Board of Elections participated in two voter registration drives demonstrating voting equipment and procedures. Program and Development Innovations:
- Completed the Courthouse Project Phase 1, an \$8 million project, which includes a new sallyport in the first floor of the adjoining Chatham County Parking Garage for secure inmate transfer, two new tunnel connectors, holding capacity for 190 inmates and new offices for the Sheriff’s Offices Court Services Division. The project provides improved efficiency for court appearances for inmates and increased security since the

number of inmate transfers from holding areas to court can be minimized and restricted with the latest in technological innovation. The completed project also removes the need for the former jail on Montgomery Street, and the site can be reserved for future expansion of much-needed space for the judiciary. The project also demonstrated Chatham County’s commitment to its local construction companies. Under Phase 1A, the tunnel connectors, the County introduced Best Value Contracting to obtain the services of TIC-The Industrial Company, in partnership with Harbor Construction, to achieve 100% local construction, 38% minority participation and a local work force rate of 90%. On Phase 1B and 1C, the County served as construction manager and bid individual construction packages. Except for specialty items not available locally (modular concrete wall systems, epoxy-coated floor surface and sallyport doors), local construction companies provided 100% of the other goods and services.

- Acquired 222 West Oglethorpe Avenue, known as the Commerce Building, in lieu of a plan to renovate the old jail on Montgomery Street into an office building. The five-story building totals 69,597 square feet, but more importantly, it remains the largest office building within the closest proximity of the Courthouse. Not using the old jail site will enable future construction at the Courthouse campus to meet longer-term needs for the judiciary and maintain all courts at the same location. Meanwhile, once the administrative offices (Tax Assessor, Tax Commissioner, ICS/Data Center) relocate from the Courthouse, an interim plan will be effected to back-fill the vacated space at the Courthouse to provide some additional courtrooms to relieve caseloads, and design work can begin on the new courts building. Also relocating will be Child Support Recovery and Public Defender’s Office.
- Scheduled to open the new Animal Control Shelter in June 2010. The \$2 million project provides a state-of-the art facility of about 14,000 square feet, and the kennel areas represent almost 75% of the total space. The design calls for 116 kennels with dog runs (compared to the 38 cages now used). A separate area will serve as holding pens for cats.
- Scheduled to open the new Records Center in August 2010. The \$3 million project renovates a 38,000-square foot building into a new Records Center to consolidate the location of all county records and documents, including many historical ones, in a single location. The building, which is located 10 minutes from the Courthouse, will meet wind conditions and storm surge to withstand a Category 5 hurricane and provide capacity for document imaging and document destruction. The property’s size and location also make it ideal as a staging area in preparation for recovery from natural disasters. Besides the new building, a management plan will improve the efficiency of records retention, duplication and destruction.
- Scheduled in June 2010 to complete a new Communications Tower and storm-resistant building. The \$1 million project will replace the 285-foot tower at the Sheriff’s Office Complex. Replacement serves two goals. First, removal of the tower will be necessary since the site consumes an area needed for the Detention Center expansion. Second, the tower has aged and become in disrepair. The Communications Tower provides communications for the Sheriff’s Office, regional interoperable communications network and spaced leased to cellular phone companies.
- Added 178 acres to the County’s land conservation program, which now totals more than 1,700 acres during the past four years, with the acquisition of Pennyworth Island. The Resources Protection Commission, the citizens committee which identifies, evaluates and rates property for the land conservation, ranked the property in its Top 5 because of the property’s historical and ecological value. An archeological study describes Pennyworth Plantation, a rice mill from the early 1800s through the early 20th century, as “...one of the best represented Savannah River rice plantations in the historical record.” The archeological study discovered and documented remnants of the rice mill complex, wharf, canal, vessels and some residential structures. The site is eligible for the National Register

of Historic Places. In addition, as a marsh hammock, it provides ecological benefits.

- Scheduled in May 2010 to receive permit approval for the Salt Creek Mitigation Bank, the first salt marsh mitigation instrument in the State of Georgia. The restoration of some 100 acres of salt marsh will provide some 470 credits available for public projects, such as road, drainage and work along the Savannah River, which require mitigation to offset any impact to salt marsh ecology; otherwise, the project could not receive federal and state permit approval. A mitigation banking instrument, which the Corps of Engineers must approve with federal agencies’ concurrence, provides a savings account for future projects. It yields value not only in ecological benefits but also a savings in the time required for each individual project to identify and acquire property, develop a creation/restoration plan and obtain necessary federal approvals.
- Received a \$100,000 grant from the Georgia Recreational Trail Grant Program for a two-mile natural surface trail through the Blue Sky parcel, which Chatham County acquired for its land conservation program in 2008. This would be Phase 1 of the trail, which would someday connect to the proposed recreation area at the Litchfield tract and provide a connector to the East Coast Greenway.
- Contracted for the design and engineering of Truman Trail Phase 2, a 6.3-mile trail which will link Daffin Park (77-acre park) to Lake Mayer/Bacon Park (750 acres). The project includes 4.8 miles of new trail of asphalt and about 1.5 miles of widening the existing Julie Backus Smith Trail at Lake Mayer with recycled rubber.
- Partnered with the Coastal Heritage Society and City of Savannah in funding The Heritage Trail as a pathway to connect historical properties. It will be a multi-use path which links the Roundhouse Museum property (including Battlefield Park) and the 1st Century Campus, a planned historical facility on Magazine Street, with a link to the S&O Canal Greenway, a County project, and the East Coast Greenway, a County-endorsed project.
- Partnered with Savannah Tree Foundation and Georgia Division of Forestry on the Westlake/Lamarville Reforestation Project, which will result in the planting of some 500 specimen-quality trees on five acres to connect two existing County-owned forestlands of 21 acres and 10 acres. Chatham County acquired the property for flood mitigation. Phase I, completed in February 2010, and resulted in planting 260 trees. The balance will be planted in February 2011. With the planting of several thousand seedlings at the Litchfield Tract, Chatham County continues to surpass the goal in the “Greenest County Plan” of planting 365 trees annually.
- Partnered with the Bradley Point Homeowners Association on a beautification project to landscape the entry to the neighborhood on Whitemarsh Island.
- Approved an application for Georgia Biomass to become a qualifying business within Enterprise Zone 1. The \$10 million project will construct a state-of-the art storage and loading facility for sustainable fuel pellets, which are exported to Europe. The company agreed to work with Project Step-Up to employ at least 10% of its new workforce through a training program aimed at providing job skills to those from households in poverty.
- Obtained an environmental permit for the Slip 3 Riverwalk project on Hutchinson Island and assisted the Trade Center Authority in construction administration for the \$8 million project.
- Renewed the license agreement with the Tri-County RC Fliers and named the facility as the Staff Sgt. Anthony Davis Model Airfield to honor one of their members who died in service to America. Sgt. Davis, who was stationed at Hunter Army Airfield, was killed during an exchange of enemy fire while in Northern Iraq.
- Contracted for design of the pavilion of Mother Mathilda Beasley Park and scheduled to begin the interpretive project on the Mother Mathilda Beasley house, the final residence of Mathilda Taylor Beasley, Georgia’s first African-American nun.
- Funded \$350,000 in partnership with the City of Savannah, West Broad Street YMCA and private fundraising to renovate the YMCA on May Street and restore the facility’s importance as a cen-

terpiece for youth recreation and community programs. The facility remains one of only seven “Heritage YMCAs” in America.

- Celebrated National County Government Month in April 2010. Created by the National Association of Counties (NACo) to help raise public awareness about the roles and responsibilities of County Government, the celebration follows a month-long theme. The 2010 theme was “Healthy Counties.” During the month Chatham County highlighted services provided by the Chatham County with a special focus on the Chatham County Human Resources and Services (Wellness Division), Cooperative Extension Service, Health Department and Safety Net Planning Council.
- Kicked off the 2010 celebration of County Government Month with a Chatham County Government Fair Day at the Savannah Mall on April 2. Throughout the day citizens visited exhibits, including many by county departments. Also, Chatham County Cooperative Extension Services discussed topics on healthy eating and the proper way of washing hands to protect against the H1N1 and other viruses. Because Extension Services launched the Spring session of Walk Georgia (www.walkgeorgia.org), which is designed to develop regular physical activity habits, get healthier and more physically fit and have fun, the agency took the lead in organizing the health walk, which was a ½ mile walk around the interior of the Savannah Mall. About 75 participated. 4-H Club members and local performing arts organizations came out to demonstrate how to increase physical activity and have fun doing it through various dances.
- Worked closely with the Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council to celebrate the launch of the Council’s Health Information Exchange Pilot Project, the first Health Information Exchange in the state of Georgia. The event was held on April 14, 2010 at the J. C. Lewis Primary Health Care Center. More than 80 community stakeholders attended, including Chairman Pete Liakakis and other county commissioners, members of the Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council, representatives from both hospital systems and key local business leaders. Media coverage highlighted the role of county government in the establishment and support of the Council and the improvements in health care to the uninsured that will result from the Health Information Exchange.
- Held a Health Fair April 24 at the Live Oak Public Library, which included departmental exhibits, as well as other health organizations linked with Chatham County. The event included health screenings, performances by local performing arts groups to help citizens get physically active. Various topics such as, nutrition, lead poisoning, immunizations, food safety/ environmental health, healthy living and mental health headlined the discussions. Angela Beasley’s Puppet People performed to show children what they can do to stay healthy.
- Chatham County completed its first comprehensive Health Risk Assessment (HRA) for all County employees covered under the health insurance program. This was accomplished in conjunction with OurLife and St. Joseph’s/Candler Health Systems. Approximately 1100 employees (82%) completed the HRA process. Employees who completed the HRA received a premium discount (which is the current rate.)
- Completed design of the Detention Center expansion project construction to begin in July using the best value contracting method.
- Chatham Area Transit Authority entered into a public-private partnership with Veolia Transportation, Inc., for the management and operation of the Transit system under a delegated management model.
- Chatham County designed and funded its first ever contribution to a Retirement Health Savings Plan for active employees. This program is established to accumulate assets to reimburse for medical expenses in retirement on a tax free basis.

# COASTAL HEALTH DISTRICT

## Chatham County Health Department

### The Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council is going electronic!

One by one, the Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council (CCSNPC) health care providers are adopting electronic medical records, a system in which a patient's records are stored in computers, eliminating outdated paper records. But, without a system of communication, providers would still have to use faxes or mail to communicate with each other. So, the CCSNPC has gone a step further, establishing the Georgia's first community Health Information Exchange, **ChathamHealthLink**.

The purpose of the **ChathamHealthLink** is to allow two or more health care providers with computerized records systems to communicate by sending summaries of patient records to a central data base managed by the CCSNPC. Any data sent to the central database travels through a secure private channel called a Virtual Private Network or VPN tunnel.

In October 2009, Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council (CCSNPC) started building the HIE with a software infrastructure that allows for secure data exchange, messaging, a clinical data repository, a master patient index and a web-based portal for Safety Net providers, consumers, and others involved in supporting the communities' healthcare, beginning with a Pilot Project connecting Memorial Health University Medical Center's Emergency Department and one Federally Qualified Health Center, J.C. Lewis Health Center. Basically, each provider system can both load information and look at information for their patients in the central database. **ChathamHealthLink** went live in April 2010 with the kick off celebration "Launching the Link to a Healthy County."

Patient Privacy is built in to the

system in many layers. First all users of the system must be authorized through authentication with a user id and password. An audit log is kept to record every time a patient record is viewed and by whom. Custom access policies can be created to protect all or a portion of patient records.

Eventually all CCSNPC providers with an Electronic Medical Records system will be able to participate in the HIE. And over time, the Health Information Exchange has the capability of expanding to include all area hospital systems, public health, behavioral health, correctional health, private providers and more, as long as the participating systems have electronic medical records. In addition, our HIE will be able to report to other HIE's in the state as they are developed.

The Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council is a collaboration consisting of local providers, government representatives, advocates and consumers charged with assisting the Chatham County Commission in addressing the health care needs of the un- and under-insured. CCSNPC goals include strengthening local partnerships to build healthcare infrastructure, increasing access to care through enhanced capacity and improving efficiency within their community's Safety Net system through ongoing collaboration and evaluation. Funding for the Pilot Project came through the Georgia Department of Community Health, the CCSNPC HIE having been selected as one of three state demonstration projects, and a Health Resources and Services Administration earmark for equipment and software purchasing. CCSNPC's future aspirations extend to the participation of all regional health care providers including the rest of the Safety Net providers, regional hospitals, private providers and Public Health.

Read more about CCSNPC and **ChathamHealthLink** at [www.chathamhealthlink.org](http://www.chathamhealthlink.org).

### Special Medical Needs Clients Urged to Register with the Health Department In Case of Hurricane Evacuation

The Coastal Empire has been lucky when it comes to hurricanes; however, most experts agree that it's only a matter of time before the Georgia coast gets hit by a major storm. The 2010 hurricane season is expected to be very active and the time to prepare is now, especially if you have special medical needs and may require assistance during an evacuation.

The Chatham County Health Department maintains a Special Needs Registry which consists of residents who may require medical assistance during emergency situations. Those on the Special Needs Registry may need specially trained health care providers, special facilities equipped to meet their needs, and specialized vehicles and equipment for transport.

The Registry is provided to the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA). The Registry is truly a last resort, but if a hurricane is threatening our area, it is important CEMA and Health Department officials know where the most vulnerable residents are located so that evacuation assistance can be provided to them.

#### Here's how to register:

- Call the Special Needs Coordinator (SNC) at the Chatham County Health Department, (912) 356-2441.
- The SNC will request your mailing information and send you a special needs enrollment form to complete and return to the Health Department.

The application can also be downloaded from the Coastal Health District website at: [www.gachd.org/emergency-preparedness](http://www.gachd.org/emergency-preparedness). When the form has been completed, it can be mailed to: Chatham County Health Department Attn: Special Needs Coordinator 1395 Eisenhower Drive Savannah, GA 31406

It is important to note that people living in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and personal care homes aren't eligible for the Special Needs Registry and must follow their facility's emergency plan.

#### How the Special Needs Registry Works

Special needs persons are categorized into five levels. If you meet the criteria for levels one or two, **you are not eligible** for the Special Needs Registry. If you meet

the criteria for levels three, four, or five, your name will be entered into the Special Needs Registry.

#### Special Needs Definitions

##### Levels one and two: Not eligible for the registry

Level one and level two clients are not eligible for the Special Needs Registry. The definition for level one and level two clients is: "Persons who are independent and capable of self-care requiring only minimal support for minor illnesses and injuries, and persons with conditions requiring observation or minor supportive assistance in activities of daily living (i.e. independent with some family/caretaker support).

If a county mandatory evacuation is ordered, level one and two clients who do not have personal transportation will be advised to go by any CAT bus to the Savannah Civic Center for evacuation to a public shelter.

##### Levels three, four, and five: Eligible for the registry

Level three, four, and five clients are eligible for the Special Needs Registry.

The definition of level three residents is: "Persons with conditions requiring some level of privacy or separation but do not require skilled or continuous health care support from facility staff."

Some examples of level three residents include those with moderate Alzheimer's or dementia; those requiring assistance from a family member or caretaker for activities of daily living; those with portable oxygen; and dialysis patients.

The definition of level four residents is: "Persons requiring frequent or continuous surveillance for potentially life-threatening conditions or require bedding or bathroom facilities not available in the (public) shelter."

Some examples of level four residents include those requiring assistance with toileting; those with limited mobility who cannot sleep on a cot or transfer; brittle diabetics or epileptics; oxygen dependent persons; and those with severe dementia or psychiatric conditions.

The definition of level five residents is: "Those requiring skilled

care, continuous observation, or special equipment and services usually found in a hospital."

Some examples of level five residents include those needing IV feeding or medication; those completely bedfast requiring total care; those with uncontrolled chronic or acute physical or mental conditions; women in active labor; and those with significant injuries, difficulty breathing, or prolonged pain.

If you are not accepted into the Special Needs Program, you will be immediately called by the Health Department and advised to make other arrangements for evacuation and sheltering.

If you are accepted into the Special Needs Program and a mandatory evacuation order is about to happen, you will be advised by the United Way 2-1-1 staff to prepare. As the evacuation begins, you will be called a second time by the United Way staff and told the specific time you will be picked-up by Teleride or an ambulance.

Level three and four clients will be taken to a Special Needs Center for evaluation and transportation to a special needs shelter.

If the Special Needs Center evaluation results in a designation of level one or two, you will be taken home where you may take a CAT bus to the Civic Center for transportation to shelter. If the evaluation process results in your being designated at level five, you will be taken to a local hospital or inland shelter.

Clients accepted at level five will be called by the United Way 2-1-1 staff and told the time of pickup. When you receive the call, you will be told to be prepared to evacuate immediately and will be given a list of things that you must take to the hospital.

During an evacuation or unexpected emergency, when there is not enough time for normal registration:

- All requests to be placed on the Special Needs Registry will be recorded by the SNC.
- The SNC will refer you to public health nursing for telephone screening.
- When the screening is complete, if you are evaluated at level one or two, you will be told to take a

CAT bus to the Civic Center for transportation to shelter.

- If accepted into the Special Needs Registry at level three, four, or five, you will be told by the SNC and asked to await instructions from United Way 2-1-1.

Persons registered in the special needs database will be contacted twice a year to verify their medical condition and update their information. When a storm is about three days (72 hours) from Chatham County, you will be called by United Way 2-1-1 and told:

- That an evacuation is possible.
- To prepare your essential items' kit that includes medications and important documents.
- To be prepared to evacuate within one hour of the next call.

You will be picked up by Teleride or by ambulance and taken to a Special Needs Center or local hospital where you will be given a document pouch for use during transportation to your destination. Your registration form, medical history, allergies record and medications list will be placed in the document pouch.

Your name will be placed on a special needs tracking form and you will be given an identification number. This number, along with your name and destination, will be placed on a bracelet that you will wear to your destination during the evacuation.

Pets will only be allowed at the Special Needs Center if they are in a carrier and you have your pet's current immunization records; or if they are service animals assisting disabled persons (these animals must remain with their owner at all times). Animal Control will provide staff and equipment to temporarily care for animals that are brought to the Center.

When reentry is authorized, the evacuation process will be reversed and you will be returned to your home.

All may be quiet in the Atlantic Basic and Gulf of Mexico now, but that could change quickly. So if you qualify for the Special Needs Registry, don't wait to register. Being prepared is the best way to ensure your safety during a disaster.

## Thank You

We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations.

Due to your efforts, we were able to collect \$29,646,000.00 in 2009 for the Children of Chatham County.

- SCMPD
- Tax Commissioner's Office
- Chatham County Commission
- Chatham County Sheriff's Dept.
- U.S. Attorney's Office
- Danny Powers, Tax Commissioner

#### The Police Departments of

- Tybee Island
- Bloomingdale
- Thunderbolt
- Pooler
- Pt. Wentworth
- Garden City

And Pete Nichols - "The Producer"

## Facts

- In 2009, The Chatham County Child Support Office

- Collected \$ 29,646,000.00
- Received 2,227 New Applications
- Established 884 Child Support Orders
- Conducted 303 Paternity Tests
- Determined Paternity for 1,074 Children
- Arrested 481 Non-Paying Parents
- Seized 132 License Plates
- Jailed 293 Non-Paying Parents via Court
- Suspended 1890 Driver's Licenses
- Seized \$50,687.02 From Bank Accounts
- Seized \$ 222,530.05 From Christmas Bonuses

Staff Reductions Due To Budget Cuts  
Staff of Chatham County Child Support in 2005: 52  
Staff of Chatham County Child Support in 2009: 42  
Chatham County Comprises 2.6% of the Population of Georgia.  
In 2009, the Chatham County Child Support Office Collected 4.4% of the Child Support Collected in Georgia.

-Thank You

The Staff of Chatham County Child Support Services