

# City of Norcross

Monthly Newsletter

August 2010



## The Power of Pro-Active Thinking

Norcross' Mayor and City Council have earned a reputation for pro-active thinking with a focus on long-term financial success for the community. One example is making the City of Norcross an active member of the Municipal Electrical Authority of Georgia (MEAG), a cooperative supplier of wholesale electric power. As a member of MEAG, the City can offer citizens a competitive price for electric power, and is able to fund electricity-related projects

without relying on tax revenue. In addition, membership gives the city an invested interest in the co-op's management and a voice in how funds are used to generate electric power.

Each year, member cities purchase a certain number of megawatts from MEAG at a wholesale price, the quantity based on projected use. That power is then sold to the citizens at a price that is competitive on the retail market. For instance, in another city that isn't a MEAG member, residents may have a slightly higher electrical bill, because their city pays a different wholesale cost.

Perhaps the biggest impact on the City of Norcross community is how our electric utility profits are used to benefit the community. Like any strong cooperative, MEAG pays its members (or "stockholders") annual dividends. This money then goes into a city utility fund that is used for electricity-related projects. New streetlights and the upkeep of existing ones are paid for from this fund. Putting utilities underground, which is proposed in the redevelopment of Skin Alley – this is another potential use of electric funds. City Manager Rudolph Smith, added, "The city's electric utility is a solid business that now pays the city about \$500,000 in dividends, some of which is put into a restrictive reserve, and some of which is used for non-electric capital projects."



According to Charlie Riehm, the City Council Member who introduced to council the idea of the electricity dividend and its benefits, "MEAG is very aggressive in finding ways to improve the quality of the economics and environmental aspects of generating electric power. By being a member, Norcross is part of this aggressive management focus, and can not only impact the Norcross community in a positive manner, but also the whole state of Georgia."



He went on to explain that at a recent annual meeting of MEAG members, the decision was approved for construction of a new nuclear power plant, intended as a way to provide political, economical and environmentally-minded solutions for better power production. This decision alone will generate an estimated \$2.9 billion dollars in savings to the co-op's members over the next forty to fifty years, and will be reflected in ongoing competitive electrical costs and a higher quality of future electric power production.

Maintaining an economically strong and well-maintained community is not an inexpensive challenge. By finding alternatives to relying solely on tax dollars, the City of Norcross is able to save its citizens money and still fund many important projects in spite of a struggling economy. With a creative mindset, a unified goal, and a pro-active business approach, the city's elected officials work diligently to continue offering residents an exceptional community in which to live, work and imagine.



### Mayor

Bucky Johnson

### Mayor Pro Tem

Ross Kaul

### City Council

Andrew Hixson

David McLeroy

Charlie Riehm

Craig Newton

### City Manager

Rudolph Smith

### City Clerk

Susan B. Wuerzner

### Deputy City Clerk

Monique Lang

### City Hall

65 Lawrenceville Street

Norcross, GA 30071

Mon.—Fri. 8a.m.—5p.m.



## Lillian Webb Park: The Next Phase



by Vernae Martin, Norcross Economic Development Manager

The City is currently reviewing various development concepts for the properties surrounding the new Lillian Webb Park. Currently on the table are ideas ranging from an up-scale townhome development to a mixed-used concept, which blends residential development with retail.

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is spearheading the project to identify the best use for this land around the park. They have asked the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to offer professional recommendations for future development strategies, closely considering demographic information, marketing and socioeconomic trends, and urban planning strategies. ULI is a volunteer-based group of experts from the fields of real estate development & economics, engineering, urban planning & design. The panel's expertise encompasses commercial retail, office, residential and mixed-land uses in a variety of urban forms. ULI has been assisting municipalities, land owners and neighborhoods since 1947 by providing objective, pragmatic advice for addressing complex land use issues. The ULI panel is uniquely qualified to look at issues such as project feasibility, planning, development and implementation. Most recently, ULI has assisted with developing a vision for other metro Atlanta areas including College Park and Stone Mountain.

We think this is a great resource that will help the City of Norcross clearly define how to best move forward with planning and development concepts. Any development that occurs around Lillian Webb Park will have long-lasting impact on the quality of life and the physical character of downtown Norcross. The City looks forward to obtaining expert advice from the ULI to ensure that the City encourages the right mix of residential and commercial development and the most appropriate use of the land.

It is expected that the ULI panel will be engaged to work with the City on this very important project in early October, 2010. Once the initial consult is complete, the DDA will review the recommended strategies with City officials, and as in the past, the citizens of Norcross will be given opportunities to learn about the ideas and provide input.

## Happenings

**WHISTLE STOP  
FARMER'S MARKET**  
Every Tuesday  
Thrasher Park  
4pm—8pm

**SUMMER CONCERT  
SERIES**  
Thrasher Park  
7:30—9:30pm

**August 6**  
THE RETURN  
Beatles Tribute Show

**August 20**  
KIDBROTHERS  
60's, Soul, Motown, 80's  
& Classic Rock

**Coming September 3rd**  
A1A  
The Original & Official  
Jimmy Buffet Tribute Show

For a reminder about  
upcoming events, sign up for  
the City email list  
and/or join us on Facebook at  
[www.aplacetoimagine.com](http://www.aplacetoimagine.com)

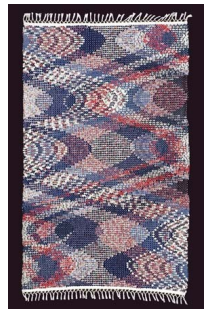


Norcross Welcome Center,  
located at 189 Lawrenceville St.

## Norcross Welcome Center an Exciting Addition to Art Community

Under the enthusiastic direction of Cate Kitchen, the Welcome Center Coordinator, Norcross's newest cultural hot spot is gearing up for a packed calendar from August through January, 2011. Activities include art exhibits, history-related activities, and other cultural functions.

Beginning in August, **the center will feature the weavings of artist Bonnie Montgomery**, who blends bold colors with a subtle interplay of patterns to create unique rugs and wall hangings. Her work will be on exhibit beginning August 11th, with an opening that evening from 4:30 until 7:30pm. Her art will be on display during regular business hours (Monday through Friday, 8am—5pm) through September.



Norcross is home to a large number of talented artists, many of whom exhibit throughout the downtown businesses, shops and restaurants. In addition, the gallery in Norcross' **Kudzu Art Zone**, at 116 Carlyle Street, opens "Up Close & Personal", August 7th, an exhibit of the people, places and things that have personal meaning to each contributing artist.



## The Greening of Norcross: Take The Park Survey!

The City of Norcross is moving forward with its goal of creating a needs assessment plan for the community's parks. Much like the City's master comprehensive plan for overall development, this will be a guide recommending where and how parks should be cre-

ated and utilized. The study will consider the needs of the city's population and demographics. It will be the "road map" used to move forward in regards to the parks and recreation programs.

As someone who lives or owns a business inside city limits, your input is valuable. The plan needs your input, and here's how you can contribute:

- Look for a survey that will be coming in the mail
- Fill it out and leave it with the receptionist at City Hall
- Or take the survey online at

[www.surveymonkey.com/s/NorcrossParkSurvey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NorcrossParkSurvey)

Please complete and return your survey no later than August 15<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions about the master planning process, contact Rip Robertson, Superintendent of the City's Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts Division, at 678.421.2025. Be part of what makes your community a wonderful place to live, work and imagine!!



## Looking Artsy, Norcross!

The Norcross Arts Alliance (NAA) has adopted a new creative logo, designed to effectively convey the "artsy energy" driving the organization's community-focused efforts. According to Arlene Beckles, a Board Member and local resident, "The NAA is all about: supporting and encouraging creativity and imagination in the arts around Norcross." Currently, the group is active with

projects involving local schools, art in the parks, and supporting the Norcross Welcome Center. For more information on their activities and charter, (and to enjoy a really great website!) visit [www.norcrossartsalliance.org](http://www.norcrossartsalliance.org)

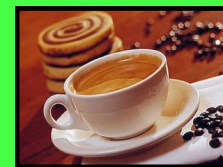
## Learning What It's Like

The Norcross Police Department (NPD) offers a "Citizens Police Academy" for those who want to get an inside look at the world of our community police officers. It is a 12-session, two-hour a week course, during which instructors from the NPD and guests cover a variety of topics on law enforcement and the Criminal Justice System. Students learn about firearms familiarization, patrol tactics, gangs, drug enforcement, special response team operations, canine patrol, criminal law, crime prevention, media relations, crime scene processing, investigations, and even more.

Twenty Norcross residents attended a recent course, and gave the experience high praise "I would give the class a "very good" to "excellent" grade," said graduate John Heald. "What made the class memorable for me was the use of stories, videos, and the hands on."

Resident, Margaret Bucari added, "I really enjoyed learning about police procedures and responsibilities. I know we hardly scratched the surface of what our police really do, but I really enjoyed it. I respected and was thankful for what they do before, and now even more."

The Academy is offered free of charge to Norcross Citizens and business owners. Anyone interested in applying for the Academy must complete an application which involves a criminal background check. For information about the next course schedule, contact Officer Gardner at 770-448-2111, ext 2311 or [jgardner@norcrosspd.com](mailto:jgardner@norcrosspd.com)



## Welcome Center History Coffee

Sat. Aug 7<sup>th</sup> 9am. – noon

Several local historians are working on a pictorial history of Norcross, and gathering photos depicting our town throughout the decades. If you haven't been to one of these, they're a lot of fun—come share photos, stories, and learn about Norcross' history!

For more information, contact Edie Riehm at 770-715-7749 or [erihm@hotmail.com](mailto:erihm@hotmail.com) or Cate Kitchen, 678-421-2049 or [ckitchen@norcrossga.gov](mailto:ckitchen@norcrossga.gov)

## Norcross Police Appreciation Day

Sept. 2nd is the annual Breakfast Social and Awards Dinner. This year's Citizens' Committee invites you to join us as a signature sponsor, make your favorite dish, or to make a donation to this most worthwhile event. To show your support, please contact Council Member Ross Kaul at 678.438.0467

## Fun Input Please!

The City is partnering with the Fowler YMCA to offer recreational programs at the Norcross Community Center and the Y. What would you like to see? Dance classes? Aerobics? Senior activities? Arts & Crafts? Seminars & Classes? Ideas welcome! (You don't have to be a YMCA member.) Please submit suggestions to [communitycenter@](mailto:communitycenter@)

## New Group to Champion Norcross Cluster Schools

A group of involved parents, community leaders, and local business people have joined together to form a new not-for-profit entity, the Norcross Community Schools Partnership (NCSP). The NCSP's goal is to enhance students' experiences at what is called "The Norcross Cluster", defined as the elementary and middle schools in the area, including Beaver Ridge, Norcross, Peachtree, Simpson, and Stripling Elementary, Pinckneyville and Summerour Middle. The Partnership also expects to work together with the very successful Norcross High School Foundation on projects benefiting that school.

Bringing together key stakeholders from the Norcross and Peachtree Corners communities, the group will define the schools' respective needs and challenges, then develop and implement a long-term strategic plan for resolving those issues. As NCSP President, Carolyn Collins, explains, "We plan to mobilize the community, with an outreach to provide the services and funding needed to help the schools achieve their goals. To define those

goals, we'll be working with school administrators and officials, as well as working closely with the Gwinnett County Board of Education and other school agencies."

Initially, the NCSP will focus on spearheading academic initiatives, funding strategic projects, and establishing community mentors. An additional initiative will be to communicate the successes already in place. Mayor of Norcross, Bucky Johnson, commented, "We've got outstanding teachers, students, and administrators in our area schools. The public just needs to

hear more about our history of success."

"I'm excited about the opportunity we all have to make a difference in the educational experiences of our local youth," noted NCSP president, Carolyn Collins. "The short- and long-term benefits this organization creates will be significant. It's a chance to make a great school system even better."

For more information on the foundation, and to get involved, visit their website at [www.NorcrossCSP.org](http://www.NorcrossCSP.org).



### CITY NUMBERS

**Business License**  
678.421.2061

**Community Center**  
678.421.2025

**Courts & Tickets**  
770.448.2173

**Economic Development**  
678.421.2023

**Yard Debris Pick-up**  
678.421.2057

**Permits & Signs**  
770.449.4062

**Police Non-Emergency**  
770.448.2111

**Property Tax**  
678.421.2061

**Street Lights**  
678.421.2000

**Streets & Paving**  
678.421.2018

**Trash Pick-up**  
770.448.3447

**Utilities Service**  
770.448.2122

**PR/Downtown Manager**  
678.421.2033

## Managing Storm Water Fees

Since some of Norcross' original storm water system is still in place, its age and condition requires ongoing repair and even replacement to keep local streets open, safe and navigable.

Annual storm water fees allow the city to update and repair its storm water infrastructure – illustrated here is a project on Mitchell Street where an overgrown culvert was addressed. Filled with kudzu, it wouldn't drain properly, and caused a hazard on the road in rainy weather. City workers cleared the culvert, installing "rip rap" or stone, stabilizing the bank, ensuring proper drainage and deterring future kudzu and weed growth.



"Before" shot of a culvert overgrown with kudzu, and posing a hazard for Norcross streets.



Cleared and properly stabilized, the culvert can safely serve its intended purpose.