

# City of Norcross

Monthly Newsletter

April 2011



*Mayor Bucky Johnson sported a FedEx hard hat while talking about the economic impact of the company's new facility under construction in Norcross.*

## Mayor Johnson Delivers A Positive State of the City

Norcross Mayor Bucky Johnson spoke to a full ballroom of Norcross citizens at the annual State of the City address, held March 9<sup>th</sup> in the Norcross Cultural Arts & Community Center. His energetic delivery and enthusiasm for everything Norcross made it an entertaining evening as well as informative. Highlights of 2010 were punctuated with beautiful photography, as was the vision for 2011. An appreciative audience was introduced to the city's new signature tune, an original jazz piece written, composed, and performed live by local business owner Steve Stevens. A recent article written by AJC reporter Lyn Piezner described Norcross as "an old town with a progressive vibe" – paragraphs

from the story were read aloud by citizens throughout the audience. According to the mayor, this was a symbolic gesture to the unusual relationship Norcross citizens enjoy with local government.

"The citizens of Norcross have always been and will continue to be a vital part of defining the vision for our city," explained Mayor Johnson. "This community is filled with people who have great ideas and energy, and who want to be part of building a strong future. The people in our city government support that creative involvement, and by partnering with citizens, we are all able to make things happen that make Norcross a fantastic place to live, work and play."

This partnership was highlighted in many of 2010's community accomplishments. The volunteer-based organization Sustainable Norcross helped the city earn a prestigious Silver Level "Green Communities" award. The newly opened Welcome Center hosted exhibits by local artists, and residents Gene Ramsay and Edie Riehm spearheaded an effort to create historical archives for the city, relying heavily on stories and photos shared by other long-time residents. Mayor Johnson also touched on accomplishments made by the Norcross School Cluster Partnership, the Parks & Greenspace Master Plan process, and the county-wide recognition earned as a result of downtown's beautification, as well as its ongoing cultural arts activities.



*Norcross' creative spirit was the theme in this year's State of the City.*

Additional accomplishments included tearing down the old city maintenance shed and consolidating it into a new Public Works, Utilities & Parks facility at 345 Lively Street. Now, where the old shed once stood by City Hall, 56 new and much-needed public parking

spaces are in place, beautifully landscaped with islands planted with trees.

Looking ahead to 2011, the mayor recognized that the Service Delivery Dispute between Gwinnett County and its municipalities has not been resolved and will be an important issue in the next year. He also lauded the \$1 million worth of beautification projects happening in the city: the current project on Cemetery St and also the future projects on College Street, Skin Alley and Jones Street, which will soon break ground.

Another hot topic for 2011 is the research being done to create a 9-1-1 emergency call system for Norcross. *(continued on page 4)*



*Recycled items were crafted into dramatic centerpieces used at the event. Created by Lori Sturgess, a member of the Norcross Arts Alliance.*



### 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.

770.448.2122



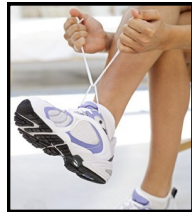
## 4th Annual Corners to Crossing Road Races

by Dale Marlowe

We're lacing 'em up and getting ready for the start of the 4th Annual Corners to Crossing Road Races on Saturday, April 16, 2011.

New this year is the location of the 10k race start which will be at the Forum. Runners will run down and back through the Forum, eventually merging with the fast course run in prior years. As last year, the 5k and 1 mile will start at the First Baptist Church of Norcross.

The 5k route is run entirely through Historic Norcross. Starting on North Peachtree running south, right down Sunset, then Valley, Ridgecrest, Dogwood Cir, Longview, back up Sunset, then south on North Peachtree to Thrasher Park. We invite



all neighbors to line the course and cheer on the runners. It is so encouraging to see folks along the course while running. Set up a lawn chair with a cup of coffee and enjoy the race. We welcome and are soliciting the addition of music by our neighbors. Feel free to crank up the boom box or amplified iPod and blast the course with music.

The finish line for all races is Thrasher Park. We welcome back Gayle Baron, Waffle House representative and 5 time winner of the Peachtree Road Race. Gayle will be assisting as the Master of Ceremonies and sharing running/training tips throughout the morning. Based on projections, this year's participation will exceed 1000 runners/walkers.

However the fun doesn't stop at the finish line. The Forum is hosting family events and retail promotions throughout the day; Taste of the Forum is from 2:30p.m.- 4:30p.m. The City of Norcross cranks it up beginning at 1:30p.m. with Spring Break in Norcross, which means that anyone with enough energy left at the end of this exciting day can dance into the evening! For more race info, please go to [www.cornerstocrossing.com](http://www.cornerstocrossing.com).



*This year's t-shirt design is great motivation to participate!*

### Happenings

April 9

Recycling & Clean Up Day  
5 great events in 1

April 16

Corners to Crossing 10K  
Thrasher Park

April 16

Spring Break in Norcross  
1:30pm - 9:30pm  
Lillian Webb Park

April 23

Annual Easter Egg Hunt  
10am  
Rossie Brundage Park

April 30

Blossom in Norcross  
10am - 5pm  
Downtown Norcross  
Garden Tours

Thru April 30

"Flora & Fauna" Exhibit  
Kudzu Art Zone Gallery

Norcross Welcome Center  
"The Gypsies of Europe"  
Jan Yoors Exhibit

For a full list of events & details,  
visit the city on Facebook or  
[www.aplacetoimagine.com](http://www.aplacetoimagine.com)



April 16th marks the second year of **Spring Break in Norcross**. This annual event will take place in Lillian Webb Park, where once again the grassy expanses will take on a "beach" feel. Loads of white sand, beach volleyball tournaments, inflatables, games and rock climbing make for a fun afternoon that begins at 1:30 and continues late into the evening. If the weather permits, the splash pad will be open, too!

The free concerts start at 1:30p.m. with the hugely popular **Mike Veal Band**, performing a variety of beach music hits.

Then at 4:30p.m., "**Back in Time**" comes on stage with their own style of great beach music and at 7:30p.m. the headliner "**The Catalina's**" kicks off the evening. Remember "Summertime's Calling Me" circa 1975? This is them! So grab a to-go picnic from one of the downtown restaurants, then stake out your spot with a blanket and chairs. Wear your best flip flops and get ready to dance and play into the evening.

Who says you have to spend all that money and drive all the way to Florida for Spring Break? The fun is all right here in Norcross. Come play!



## Norcross Blossoms in April!

New to the events calendar this year is **Blossom** – the first year of what hopefully will become an annual Garden Tour & Gardening Arts experience. On April 30<sup>th</sup> from 10a.m. – 5p.m. five gardens will be on tour for this inaugural event. In the downtown area the merchants will be hosting a Spring Open House, full of new inventory and fresh chef specials to help you shake off the winter blues. The Norcross Garden Club will be hosting its annual plant sale, and locally-owned Gardens by Design will also have a selection of plants for gardeners to choose from. There will be workshops (including one about rain-barrel making, hosted by Sustainable Norcross) and a chance to get advice from local master gardeners. Farmers from the Whistle Stop Farmer's Market will be on hand with tips on how to make your veggies flourish (and some spring veggies for sale!). In addition, there will be artists selling their garden-art and Kudzu Art Zone is hosting a flower-arranging class. The garden tour is free, and maps showing you where to tour the gardens will be available at downtown retail shops the day of the event. For details about this colorful new event, and about all the exciting activities on Norcross' 2011 spring calendar, visit [www.aplacetoimagine.com](http://www.aplacetoimagine.com) and join us on Facebook or for city emails to stay in the loop. No more hibernating, Norcross – IT'S SPRING TIME!



*The gardens of Norcross resident and master gardener Julie Foster will be one of the beautiful stops on this year's tour.*

**Blossom is sponsored by the Norcross Garden Club, Gardens by Design, and Norcross' Downtown Development Authority (DDA)**

## Sustainable Norcross Earns Another Green Thumbs Up!

On February 24, 2011, the efforts of the citizen-based group, Sustainable Norcross, were recognized at The Civic League for Regional Atlanta's annual *What's Right with the Region!* awards dinner. *What's Right with the Region!* recognizes individuals and organizations working to build an Atlanta region where everyday people have a voice in the plans and policies guiding the future of their communities and the region.

At this year's event, The Civic League presented its Regional Excellence Award to Sustainable Norcross Commission founder Connie Weathers, as well as former Fayette County Commission Chair Jack Smith, and StoryCorps Atlanta. Regional Excellence Awards are presented to individuals, organizations and initiatives that are meeting a need in the community, demonstrating innovative solutions, and creating opportunities for positive change in the region. This prestigious award comes right after Sustainable Norcross also achieved what few other communities in Metro Atlanta can claim - Green Communities Silver Certification.

According to Ms. Weathers, "This award, like the Green Communities Award and our 2010 nomination for Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful's Best Green Government, is exciting not only for me personally, but for everyone in Norcross who rolled up their sleeves to achieve a common goal. It takes a village, and the success of Sustainable Norcross to date has been the result of our city government supporting and working with its citizens, and of a group of citizens who really care about the community. It's exciting what we have achieved in reducing our community's overall environmental impact. And there's still more in the works!"

Only 2½ years old, this 5-member citizen panel advises the City of Norcross on environmental and sustainability topics. Their primary objective is the development of a measured sustainable city plan and regular communication with the city leadership. Goals range from water and energy conservation, transportation and air quality to green building and land use. Heavy emphasis is on education and volunteerism.

As part of their educational outreach, the group has hosted classes on making rain barrels, handed out information at the local Whistle Stop Farmers Market, and given workshops on water quality monitoring of local streams. Led by Ms. Weather's indomitable energy and vision, they have organized community clean-up days, enhanced local recycling efforts, supported efforts by Norcross' City Council to go paperless, and in a short time, made a positive and visible difference in Norcross' natural environment.

While Ms. Weathers has unquestionably led the charge in earning Norcross headline status as a sustainable community, the Sustainable Norcross Commission is comprised of several additional hard working volunteers who deserve recognition for their part. These Sustainable Norcross Commission members are Chuck Cimarik, Kathy Nau, Heather Royston and Jim Scarbrough. For more information about the Sustainable Norcross Commission and its activities and volunteer opportunities, please visit <http://sustainablenorcrossinc.blogspot.com>.



*L to R: City Manager Rudolph Smith, Sustainable Norcross Chairperson Connie Weathers, Council Member Andrew Hixson at awards dinner.*

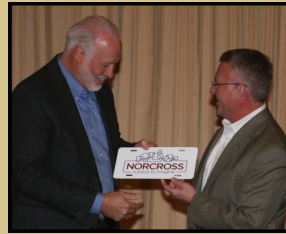


## State of the City

(continued from page 1)

Currently, Gwinnett County receives Norcross' 9-1-1 calls and then has to route them back to the Norcross Police Department. No data is transferred with the call, and if it drops, the City is left without the caller's phone number. The mayor described it as a "wacky system," that hopefully can be streamlined in 2011.

The mayor's presentation ended with a dramatic flourish when he donned the FedEx hard hat he wore during the recent groundbreaking of the \$55 million FedEx Ground facility being constructed in Norcross. After showing a video press release produced for the



event, he then paraphrased the words of Governor Nathan Deal who also attended the groundbreaking, saying, "This was a great year in Norcross...and there's more to come in 2011."

After the closing performance of the new Norcross song and a photography show highlighting 2010, Norcross Neighbors Association (NNA) President Sean Matthews presented the mayor with a newly-printed license plate promoting the Norcross logo. The license plates are free to NNA members, and \$7 each to non-members. For information on securing a plate, please visit [www.norcrossneighbors.com](http://www.norcrossneighbors.com).

Special thanks are extended to Robert Patrick and Charlie Harbin for providing the photography used in the evening's slide presentations, and to the NNA, Progressive Development Committee (PDC) and Norcross Arts Alliance for hosting the event.



Mayor Johnson discusses political issues with daughter of local businesswoman Anna Balkan.

### 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



## April 9 - Five Great Recycling Events!

Once again, the City of Norcross is making spring cleaning easy for citizens and visitors, without negatively impacting the environment. From 9am - 1pm on April 9th, drop off old paint, outdated or broken electronics, documents that need shredding, plus all that big stuff that needs dumping. It will all be recycled! Plus there's a canned food drive to support the Norcross Co-op Ministries. Most of the events are free; however, there are some costs with recycling certain items. To get the full scoop, including any related costs and

lists of what materials are allowed for drop off, please visit [www.aplacetoimagine.com](http://www.aplacetoimagine.com).

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS - Helpful Info & Events

- Reminder: The city utilities department is now offering **monthly utility invoices via email**. A signed letter with the name on the account, the account number, correct email and a daytime phone number is required. Please submit this information to the first floor receptionist in City Hall during regular business hours (8a.m. - 5p.m. Monday through Friday).
- Spring weather can be crazy - for safety alerts, be sure you're signed up for **Nixle** (Nixle.com).
- **Yard debris service** will continue as usual on the bi-weekly schedule (April's collection dates are the 11th and 25th). Please place yard debris at curbside by 6a.m. each scheduled morning. For the Public Works calendar, visit [www.norcrossga.net](http://www.norcrossga.net), under Municipal, then Public Works, Utilities & Parks.
- The City's Economic Development Dept. is hosting a **Merchants' Meet 'n Greet Breakfast** on Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup> 9a.m. - 11a.m. in the NCACC. For more info, call 678.421.2027 or email Code Enforcement Supervisor Philomena Robertson at [probertson@norcrossga.net](mailto:probertson@norcrossga.net).
- **Annual City Hall Open House** is Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> 9a.m. - 1p.m., with outdoor city department interactive displays for kids of all ages. Free! For more info, contact Code Enforcement Supervisor Philomena Robertson at 770.448.7327 or [probertson@norcrossga.net](mailto:probertson@norcrossga.net).