

City of Norcross

Monthly Newsletter

May 2011



State Approves Expansion of Norcross Opportunity Zone

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs recently approved Norcross' application for expansion of the city's Opportunity Zone (OZ). The current OZ, established in 2009 and the first in Gwinnett County, runs primarily along Buford Highway where it intersects city limits. This expansion means the OZ now includes the Northbelt Business Park located at Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Best Friend Road. These are designated areas within which new and existing businesses are offered substantial state tax credits, up to \$3,500 per job, for creating two or more new jobs.



According to Norcross' Economic Development Manager Rusty Warner, "This expanded opportunity zone will help strengthen Norcross' redevelopment efforts and bring new jobs into the city. Opportunity Zones are great - they make it more feasible for our existing companies to grow, and incentivize new companies to relocate or start up here. In a tough economy, the savings these tax credits represent are especially meaningful."

The OZ incentive, which can be used annually for up to five years, is available to new or existing businesses that create and maintain two or more new fulltime jobs. These credits offset some or all of a business' income tax liability with any excess applied to its state payroll withholding.

The OZ is one of several incentives used to entice new businesses into the city. Norcross' economic appeal has attracted companies like Suniva and FedEx Ground, bringing in employees who in turn support local restaurants and shops, attend events and often become residents. One of Norcross' biggest economic incentives is the very character of the town, a vintage charm enhanced by a progressive approach to redevelopment.

"Opportunity zones add value and interest to those looking to invest in the already successful concept of new urbanism in this area," explained Mayor Bucky Johnson. "Our historic downtown has been completely revitalized using unique redevelopment tools, and this opportunity zone is just that; another opportunity to expand revitalization even further on the city's east side."

Businesses interested in additional information on the tax incentive can contact Rusty Warner, Economic Development Manager for the City of Norcross at rwarn@norcrossga.net. Information can also be found at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs website, www.dca.ga.gov/us.



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



Classic Car Show Comes To Downtown

From Model T's to muscle cars and motorcycles, Downtown Historic Norcross will be the host to classics from every generation in the annual **Norcross Car Show, May 21st, 8am - 4pm.**

With over 300 entries, this year's show promises to be the biggest ever, offering a great lineup of

the coolest hot rods, nicest antique cars and trucks, vintage motorcycles and even new cars. Whether you want to take a trip down memory lane in a '54 Chevy, check out the engine in a '68 Mustang, or show off the paint job on your restored Corvette, don't miss this chance to enjoy the vibes of a classic car show in a classic Southern town. It's pure old fashioned fun! For details, visit aplacetoimagine.com.



Happenings

WELCOME CENTER

Kathy Estes "Colors & Copper"
Artist Opening
May 11, 6pm—7:30pm
Preview: 2011 Ghost Tour
Stories & Book Signing
May 13, 6pm—8pm

C.H.U.K. 5K RUN

May 14, 8am
Thrasher Park

FARMER'S MARKET OPENS

May 17, 4pm - 8pm
Thrasher Park

CLASSIC CAR SHOW

May 21, 8am - 4pm
Downtown Historic Norcross

PATRON SAINTS PROJECT

R&B Concert
May 21, 5pm - 9pm
Lillian Webb Park

STRAWBERRY STROLL & 5K

May 28, 11am - 3pm
Downtown Historic Norcross

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

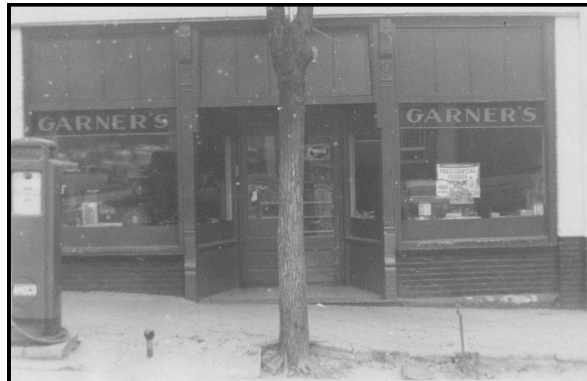
"Sinatra & Friends"
May 30, 7:30pm
Thrasher Park

Norcross Welcome Center Celebrates First Year Anniversary

Recently celebrating its first anniversary since opening in 2010, the Norcross Welcome Center has evolved into a viable and dynamic part of Norcross' cultural community. Under the direction of its coordinator, Cate Kitchen, the center is now home to many Norcross historical artifacts, as well as a hub for a diversity of artist openings and exhibits, traveling museum exhibits and live presentations.

The original vision for the center was in part the work of City Council Member Charlie Riehm and city staffer Rip Robertson. It was envisioned as a place for visitors to obtain information about the history of Norcross, as well as a resource center for residents, businesses and visitors. Mr. Riehm works with various agencies to find funds for local projects and the Welcome Center was no exception. Much of the expense for renovation of the property came from SPLOST funds, while hotel and motel operation taxes cover most of the annual operating expenses.

Under the direction of Ms. Kitchen, the agenda of the center has grown, evolving from its original mission to one with an even greater richness. With a focus on art and history, the Welcome Center is becoming much more of a gathering place, where visitors can socialize as well as learn. In addition to local memorabilia and a multitude of brochures about local and metro



Nostalgic photos like this one have been shared by Welcome Center visitors and collected for the book, "Images of America: Norcross", to be published this fall.

interests, the center offers a busy calendar of art and traveling museum exhibits. It also sponsors special events and presentations with a sophisticated appeal. By bringing in supporting speakers and entertainers related to the exhibits, Ms. Kitchen successfully adds an extra dimension to the center experience. She feels that giving "that something extra" has improved attendance and made for a much broader audience, drawing from many of the surrounding communities. It is her goal to add richness to Norcross' already exciting cultural offerings.

Photographers, painters, jewelers and weavers have had opportunities to display their works and meet the public

during opening receptions. Local residents have enjoyed chances to share stories and photos from the "olden days", and little kids have gotten to see and learn about the first fire truck in Gwinnett County, now restored and housed in the adjacent Fire Museum.

The baseball exhibit, currently found in the rotunda at City Hall, is also part of the Welcome Center's historic outreach. Organized in 1994 by several local residents who call themselves the "Norcross Old Timers Baseball Association", the display has a unique appeal, reflecting Norcross' contribution to the early days of this favorite American sport. This once tiny railroad town boasted 16 players who signed professional contracts between 1910 and 1950 – more than any other town per capita in the USA. This is a record that still holds today!

In order to develop the center's history collection, Ms. Kitchen worked with local resident historians Gene Ramsay and Edie Riehm to co-author a soon-to-be-published pictorial history of Norcross, part of Arcadia Publishing's "Images of America" series. Many of these photos and local artifacts can be found at the center, alongside exhibits that reflect the trendy, progressive side of Norcross today. The Norcross Welcome Center, which possibly has equal value as a special events venue, is a positive undertaking for the city and a great attraction to all.

The Norcross Welcome Center is located at 189 Lawrenceville Street, next to the fire station. Regular center hours are 8a.m. – 5p.m. Monday through Friday. Special events and openings are listed at www.aplacetoimage.com or by contacting Ms. Kitchen at ckitchen@norcrossga.net.

For a complete, detailed list of May events, including 2011 info about the Farmers Market, Summer Concert Series, NAA's Artist Showcase Series, Lionheart Theatre, Welcome Center activities and other great things going on throughout town, join us on Face Book or online at www.aplacetoimage.com.

Tons Unloaded During Spring Cleaning & Recycling Event

The city's first recycling event for 2011 was a spectacular success, with over 560 Norcross residents and visitors from other communities taking advantage of the opportunity to spring clean basements, attics and garages. This biannual event, which was begun in 2008, is organized by Norcross Code Enforcement Supervisor Philomena Robertson, who coordinated a team of volunteers to support the five different recycling stations open during the day. These stations typically include electronics recycling, paper shredding, dumpsters for large household debris, and a canned food drive; new to the line-up this year was paint recycling.

According to Ms. Robertson, "We received \$1,384.25 from paint recycling fees, all of which were donated to Norcross Co-op Ministries to help local families. This is another part of our support for the 2011 'CAN' Do for Hunger Campaign."

Cash donations and 827 canned and non-perishable items were received during the day's food drive. This collection, which is part of the county-wide "CAN" Do initiative, supplemented the supply of food items already collected for the Co-op Ministries during the city's "CAN" Do campaign in February. Out of 9000 cans collected throughout Gwinnett County at that time, Norcross donated about two-thirds of the total.

In addition, 8.36 tons of debris/trash were collected. The total on the curbside recyclables was 1.65 tons and the electronic recycling results weighed in at 13,412 pounds. The events were part of Keep America Beautiful's Great American Cleanup, the nation's largest community improvement program, which takes place annually from March 1 through May 31.

Participating again this year was American Security Shredding, which shredded over 10,000 pounds of paper and documents in just over three hours. Atlanta Recycling Solutions was on hand to collect outdated electronics, and

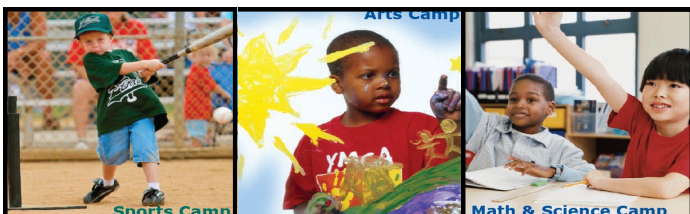
Williams Paint Recycling received 2,376 containers of unusable paint, all of which will be recycled.

Much of the event's success was due to the volunteers who unloaded items from cars, kept tallies and organized the deliveries. "We had six local volunteers who made all the difference in today's success," commented Ms. Robertson. "Art Geist and Caitlin Clark have volunteered for the recycling events since we started in 2008, and Bob and Meryl Wilkerson, Tina DeVincenzo and Yaskin Lopez provided invaluable support." She then went on to credit the efforts of the City of Norcross employees who offered their time and energy, saying that as a result of this joint community effort, the clean-up and recycle events received positive feedback from visitors, the media, and participating recycling companies.

The next event date for 2011 will be Saturday, October 15th. Plans are to offer the same clean-up and recycling activities, making it easy for people to clean out their homes without negatively impacting the local environment.



Resident Tina DeVincenzo helped collect over \$390 in cash donations for the "CAN" Do food drive.



CAMP IMAGINE Sign Your Kids Up!



Looking for something for the kids to do this summer? Keep them busy at Norcross' CAMP IMAGINE! The city is partnering with the Robert Fowler YMCA to bring a series of really neat camps for kids ages 6 -12, beginning May 31. There's an art camp, a math and science camp, and an "all around sports sampler" where kids get to learn the basics of all sorts of popular sports, like soccer and t-ball. Small groups, led by the YMCA's super-creative camp counselors, will provide safe, fun activities at the Norcross Community Center and in local parks and playing fields. The price for each session is very reasonable; camp dates, times and details are available online at aplacetoimagine.com. You can also meet the counselors and **learn more on May 7th, from 10am - noon at the Community Center** (10 College Street).



Teach for America to Put "Best and Brightest" Grads in Norcross Schools

by Laura Sullivan, editor of *Norcross.Patch.com*, an online news source for the Norcross community.



In the 2011- 2012 school year, 75 young teachers will show up to work in Gwinnett County. Some come from Ivy League schools, and most will be from the top of their class. They could have studied history, art, business and law - but none would have studied education. They are qualified participants in the national Teach for America (TFA) program.

The program's mission is to put "outstanding recent college graduates...in urban and rural communities in our nation's lowest-income communities." The idea is to close the achievement gap and eliminate "educational inequity" nationwide by putting the brightest, freshest minds on the job - and the program has been going gangbusters so far, according to some research. Since TFA expanded into metro Atlanta in 2000, 900 teachers have been put in front of the classroom. There are currently 187 members in Clayton, Cobb and Fulton counties. With the addition of the 75 Gwinnett teachers that number will be bumped up to 262.

The Gwinnett positions will be in the Norcross, Berkmar and Meadowcreek clusters, with the majority teaching at elementary and middle schools, according to school officials. It may come as a surprise to some Gwinnett residents that any of their schools are considered either urban or lowest-income. Shyam Kumar, Managing Director of Growth Strategy and Development for Atlanta's TFA program, said these clusters were singled out because the vast majority of students get free or reduced lunch and because of their diversity.

"We wanted to focus more on Latino students," said Kumar. "There's been a lot of emphasis on the African-American students (in the program) already. That's one reason for wanting to target these schools."

"The demographic data has really changed in this area, particularly for the school district," said Glenn Pethel, Executive Director of Leadership Development for Gwinnett Schools. "Generally, we do look a great deal like an urban population."

There were 47,000 applicants for 4,600 Teach for America positions last year. "We like to say that we are more competitive than Ivy League Schools," said Kumar.

The recent grads must commit for two years, but they can stay on for longer. Even though the program estimates that one-third of TFA teachers do stay in the system, they hope those who do move on will become education advocates in their respective fields.

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

Norcross Vanity Plates - Show Your Community Pride!



If you're a member of Norcross Neighbors, you can now receive one Norcross vanity license plate as part of your \$20 annual dues. Non-members may purchase the cool vanity plate for \$7 at 45 South Café, at Norcross Neighbors scheduled meetings, or by contacting Cyndi Curland at ccurland@visix.com. For more info regarding Norcross Neighbors, please visit www.norcrossneighbors.com.

...and speaking of community pride, check out the new GA Lottery commercial shot in Downtown Historic Norcross! It's airing now, and you can also see it on the new City YouTube Channel. Check us out!

