

City of Norcross

Monthly Newsletter

July 2011

The Community Imagined...Coming Soon!

Norcross' brand as "a place to imagine" was created with the input of the community. Results from numerous surveys, interviews and Town Hall meetings resulted in identifying a common vision, that Norcross be recognized for its creativity, an energy that is realized in a diversity of ways.

One of the ideas sanctioned is arts in the public park areas. Thrasher Park is the home to a "family" of whimsical frog statues, and this summer it will also become the home of another whimsical art element, this one in 2-D.



Artist Jennifer Freeman working on the mosaic in her studio

Area artists Anne Labaire and Jennifer Freeman have been working together to create a dramatic mosaic which will be installed in the circle of brick pavers located between the pavilion and the playground in Thrasher. Ms. Labaire, a well-known gallery owner in the downtown area for many years, designed the intricate 2-d art. Another area artist, Ms. Freeman is converting the design into mosaic tiles; she has painstakingly laid out the tile design in her studio, while the concrete base for it was poured and is currently curing. The concrete will cure for about four weeks and then, weather permitting, installation of the tile will be in early August. There are some fun PR activities planned around the project, including a dramatic unveiling when it's complete

(August 19th is the projected unveiling date.) Stay tuned for updates!

This mosaic is sure to become a Norcross icon, enhancing our city's growing reputation as a destination for artists and arts appreciators. Since the project reflects the great creative relationships between local artists and organizations like the city and the Norcross Arts Alliance, it will truly be a visual reminder of Norcross's exciting creative energy!



Keeping Norcross The Best Place to Live & Do Business

We have all heard the saying "There are rules for a reason." There are codes and ordinances for a reason too; basically, the city's codes are in place and enforced to maintain a desirable environment for everyone who lives, works and visits here. It is Code Enforcement's goal to provide excellent community services in a fair, efficient and responsive manner.

Norcross' Code Enforcement team is dedicated to educating people about the rules and to enforcing them. Since not everyone is aware of all the codes, code enforcement officials typically only issue a warning notice when the code is first violated. This is a reflection on the high quality customer service that the city strives to maintain, as according to City Manager Rudolph Smith, "Giving someone a warning first is a courtesy the city offers – it's not required by law."

So while education and a fair chance to comply are the priorities, enforcing the rules is important, too. Due to an increase in the number of people complaining about apparent code violations, the department has recently become more stringent in their enforcement.

"The majority of people do comply within the timeframe given in their warning," explained Norcross' Code Enforcement Supervisor Philomena Robertson. "And based on the type of violation, we will continue to provide a reasonable amount of time for people to comply. However, those that do not take advantage of the time given will be cited."

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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.

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Old Rectory Gets New Purpose

A charming rotunda and a wide, welcoming porch characterize the old rectory purchased by the City of Norcross in 2006 as part of its Cultural Arts and Community Center. From 1887 until the early 1960's, the house served as the parsonage for the original Norcross Methodist Church. Then in the 1960's, it became the rectory for the St. Patrick's Catholic Church, remaining a rectory until it was purchased by the city.



Since then it has been used largely for storage; now, however, the vintage home is being refreshed with a whole new purpose envisioned for its future.

According to Norcross' Economic Development Manager Rusty Warner, the old home will soon become the newest addition to the city's growing number of cultural arts centers.

"Uses proposed for the rectory to date have been a senior center and an event center," explained Warner. "However, the Welcome Center and NCACC are now providing many senior activities, so I felt a much more effective use of the rectory from both economic and civic viewpoints would be to adapt the building to a multi-purpose arts facility. It could be used to hold small events, and also be run as an arts incubator."

This idea was formally endorsed by Norcross' Mayor and City Council, and funds for the project were provided through the city's Public Works Dept. Although the results of the renovation work will be dramatic, the costs are reportedly minimal, as the building was still in basically good shape. According to Norcross building official Jimmy Maloney, who is coordinating the renovation, the building only needed a few ADA adaptations and a coat of paint to be useable.

"We're doing the basics to make it suitable for a tenant, enough to make the space appealing and comfortable," said Maloney. "A local General Contractor is helping us get the work done for a discounted cost - although he wishes to remain anonymous, his work is really appreciated and is making this endeavor feasible. As more funds become available, we'll continue renovations down the road, but this is a great start and kick-starts the use of this building."

To finish the interior of the rectory, a volunteer effort by the community will be required, since the funds to have this done professionally are not currently in the budget.

"Volunteers will be needed to do minor repair work to the drywall and then paint the interior," said Warner. "We have such great participation from this community, I am confident there won't be any problem getting it completed. And knowing how the residents around here are, they'll find a way to make it a fun process!"

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Happenings

July 3

Annual Festival & Fireworks
3pm & dusk
Downtown Historic Norcross

July 8 & 22

Summer Concert Series
7:30pm Thrasher Park

July 9

BluesBerry Festival
6:30pm - 11pm
Downtown Historic Norcross

July 9

Booksigning: "The Bible of Southern Cooking"
by Billie Van Dyke
2pm - 4pm
Norcross Welcome Center

July 23

Date Night Downtown
6:30pm - 9:30pm
Downtown Historic Norcross

July 30

B98.5 Movie Night
7pm, Lillian Webb Park
Whistle Stop Farmers Market
Every Tuesday 4pm - 8pm
Thrasher Park

For event details, visit
www.aplacetoimagine.com



DOWNTOWN HISTORIC NORCROSS

**BLUESBERRY
FESTIVAL**

**JULY 9, 2011
630 PM - 1130 PM**

www.aplacetoimagine.com

Fresh, local blueberries for sale too!

**LIVE
MUSIC
STONEY
BROOKS**
T-GREASE JOHNSON

Burn Ban & Watering Restrictions Now In Effect



The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has issued a ban on open burning this summer. Gwinnett County Fire and Emergency Services are responsible for the enforcement of this state-issued burning ban within the County.

From May 1 - September 30, **you may not burn** leaves, tree limbs, or other yard waste, forest land, or use air curtain destructors for land clearing. Sunday is NOT a Burn Day as prescribed by Gwinnett County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 46, Fire Prevention and Safety.

In addition, Code Enforcement would like to remind residents and business owners that watering restrictions are still in place. The Georgia Water Stewardship Act went into effect statewide on June 2, 2010. It allows daily outdoor watering for purposes of planting, growing, managing, or maintaining ground cover, trees, shrubs, or other plants only between the hours of 4 p.m. and 10 a.m. Outdoor water use for any purposes other than watering of

plants, such as power washing or washing cars, is still restricted to the current odd/even watering schedule. Odd-numbered addresses can water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. Even-numbered and unnumbered addresses are allowed to water on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

For more information about what is allowed and when, please go to norcrossga.net and click under Municipal for Code Enforcement info, or call 678.421.2027.



Let's Keep Making A Difference!

Norcross Co-op Ministries, Norcross' local food pantry, used to assist approximately 300 families a month. That number is now well over 1000 families a month! How can we all help the growing number of hungry families in our community?

The 2011 "CAN" Do for Hunger Campaign is part of the Gwinnett Municipal Association's on-going project to fight hunger in the county. Cities are teaming to support local food co-ops and pantries, and to fill their shelves with non-perishable food and dry goods. So far this year, Norcross is the leader for collecting canned foods and dry grocery staples – individuals and groups throughout the city have made a heartwarming impact on the amount of goods collected.

Civic organizations, businesses, churches, schools and scout troops are encouraged to join the city in its collection efforts. Recently, the Georgia Gang Investigators Association (GGIA) supported the cause – president Marco Silva reports 126 canned goods were collected at a recent GGIA meeting. Each concert at the Summer Concert Series will have a collection bin handy for the convenience of concert-goers, plus there are bins at City Hall and 45 South Café.

For more information on what can be donated and for support in organizing your local collection drive, please contact the Community Development Dept. at 678.448.2122 or email probertson@norcrossga.net.

Chill Out with Norcross' Hot Events Line Up!

What better way to survive the summer heat than by unwinding at one of Norcross' "cool" July events?! The best place to see what's happening is the city events website, www.aplacetoimagine.com, where you can find details about the entire lineup of July activities - and don't forget to sign up for the weekly email reminder! In the meantime, here's a quick look at the July calendar:

Tuesdays, it's the 4pm – 8pm, it's the **Whistle Stop Farmer's Market**. Over 35 vendors and free kids' activities - come see the Exotic Animals here on July 12 (pet a real kangaroo!).

Of course, the most spectacular event in July is the **Annual July 3rd Celebration**, hosted by the city and the Norcross Business Association. This year, it's on a Sunday - festivities begin at 3pm in Lillian Webb Park with the appearance of "Housebroken", billed as Atlanta's premiere rock and roll party. 4pm kicks off more family fun in downtown and at 7pm, "Kid Brothers" goes onstage in Lillian Webb Park, playing the best of 60's, Soul, Motown and Classic Rock. Bring a blanket, chairs and a picnic and stake out your spot for great music, family fun and of course, a beautiful fireworks display beginning at dusk.

There's no shortage of music or chances to dance in July - check out the **BluesBerry Festival** (July 9), when we'll have fresh local berries for sale, plus some great blues bands up on Al Karnitz' flatbed truck making music that'll keep downtown on its blueberry toes! Plus, the **Summer Concert Series** continues with an awesome lineup, and there's **Date Night Downtown** (July 23) with great jazz and free salsa lessons.

"The Velveteen Rabbit" is on the **Lionheart Theatre** playbill from July 14 – 17, and check out the exhibits and the book signings in the **Norcross Welcome Center!** Plus "Yogi Bear" is July's **free movie in the park**, and the Vargas & Harbin Studio Art Gallery is opening downtown. There's more on the list, too - with all the things going on around here, it's small wonder that Historic Norcross was voted "Best Arts & Cultural Scene" in Gwinnett - come unwind with us!



Keeping Norcross the Best Place to Live & Do Business (continued from page 1)

So what are the rules? An in-depth list is online at www.norcrossga.net. Under "Municipal", click "Code Enforcement" and then "Code of Ordinances". City codes and ordinances apply to both residential and commercial, depending on their zoning. Most repairs or renovations to structures in the city require a permit. For commercial businesses, permits extend not only to repair and renovation but also to paint colors and most signage issues. If you plan to enlarge, alter, repair, demolish or change a building or house in any way, it is always best to contact Community Development *before* beginning the job.

There is a brochure available at City Hall and on the City website that offers details on the more common issues, or you can call Community Planning at 678-421-2027. The department creed states "Through a cooperative effort between code enforcement and our citizens we can make the City of Norcross a safer and cleaner place to live." So to report a complaint, find out what the codes are, and get a permit when required, call 770.448.7327 or email probertson@norcrossga.net.



Check Before You Start!

Thinking about painting the front of your office, or putting out a new sign? Planning to add a new deck to your home, or cut down a tree in the backyard? Before you do anything to the exterior of your home or business, save yourself a potential headache by asking first if your project requires a city permit, and/or review by the Architectural Review Board (ARB). The ARB is in place to help maintain the charming look of our historic district, as well as educate people throughout the community about the design guidelines that are in place. ARB design guidelines are online at www.norcrossga.net under "Community Development" - you'll also find info on what paint colors are acceptable for exterior facades and trim. For more information about permits and ARB requirements, you can also call Norcross' Community Development Department at 770.448.2122.

CITY NUMBERS

Business Licenses
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

Old Rectory Gets New Purpose (continued from page 2)

The idea of using the facility as an arts incubator has also been enthusiastically embraced by the Norcross Arts Alliance (NAA), a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting cultural arts in the city.

According to City Council Member and NAA President Charlie Riehm, the NAA had already been working on the concept of a city arts incubator, a concept originally introduced by Norcross resident and artist Elsie Porter.

"With community input, the vision has unfolded to have a city-owned building in the downtown area where there could be a retail/gallery space for various types of art and art classes for the public," explained Riehm. "In addition, there would be business education programs and studios – an 'incubator' - for artists who want to be entrepreneurs.

With the rectory's historic charm and its proximity to the community center and downtown, it's an ideal location that we're hoping will work for this concept." In 2010, the City of Norcross was voted one of the "Best Arts & Culture" places in Gwinnett County by the readers of *Gwinnett Magazine*. This reputation for creative energy was originally embraced in a formal "Imagination Proclamation", formally endorsed by the city's mayor and council. In this proclamation, the city officially dedicates itself to supporting and growing the arts in the City of Norcross, underlining its image as "a place to imagine".

Senior Citizens Tax Abatement Deadline July 31st

If you qualify, don't forget to apply for the Tax Abatement for senior citizens 62 (sixty-two) years old and older. Applications may be obtained from City of Norcross City Hall located at 65 Lawrenceville St. 8a.m. – 5p.m, Mon – Fri or at www.norcrossga.net. The City of Norcross accepts completed, notarized forms from May 1st to deadline July 31st yearly. For more information, please contact the City Tax Department at 770-448-2122.