

TELEVISION STATION WSB-TV / ATLANTA
QUARTERLY LISTING OF LOCAL PROGRAMS REFLECTING CONCERNS
AND/OR NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY
OCTOBER 1, 2008 – DECEMBER 31, 2008

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(Mini-Series Documentaries are produced by WSB-TV's News Department and appear within the newscasts as a public service to the community. The Action News "mini-series" are aired one to four times daily Monday -Friday from 5am-7am; 12-1:00pm; 5-7pm; 11-11:35pm; 1:35-2:05am (repeat). On Saturdays, Action News is aired from 6-9am; 12-12:30pm; 6-6:30pm; and 11-11:35pm. Sundays: 7:30-11am; 12-12:30pm; 6-7pm; and 11-11:35pm. Segments are generally 1:00-6:00 minutes in length. The following, in date order, are the reports broadcast during fourth quarter, 2008)

QUARTERLY ISSUES / PROGRAMS LIST

- EDUCATION / YOUTH
 - HEALTHCARE
 - ECONOMY
- ENVIRONMENT / CONSERVATION
 - TRAFFIC / TRANSPORTATION
- LAW ENFORCEMENT & CRIMINAL JUSTICE
 - POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
 - COMMUNITY/NEIGHBORHOODS

Judge Urges UGA Dean Cleared of Inappropriate Behavior

Date: 12/02/08 17:17:50 duration :21 Jovita Moore

A federal judge is recommending UGA *clear* the name of its former journalism dean. John Soloski resigned in 2005 after a university employee accused him of sexual harassment. The court has called that complaint "arbitrary and unreasonable." Soloski sued the university after his resignation saying president Michael Adams used the allegations to force him to resign.

DeKalb Schools Unveil Proposed Budget Cuts

Date: 11/03/08 5pm duration :58 John Bachman

DeKalb County schools won't release its newest version of proposed budget cuts until tonight's meeting. But we did learn that while the voting date is a week earlier, the plan is very similar. According to estimates by DeKalb County, the plan would trim \$26 million dollars from a nearly \$900 million dollar yearly budget. One cut making noise with opponents is transportation. The district wants to cut door-to-door busing to magnet schools, but Amy Chen says many parents won't be able to get their children to and from school. Dr Amy Chen, parent: "For many of these children, the only way out of their neighborhood is education. If we deny them their transportation, we're denying them an opportunity." Besides busing, DeKalb School Board members will consider cutting at least 100 jobs. Cutting salaries for anyone making more than \$100,000 eliminating some programs ... and offering early retirement.

UGA Professor Cleared

Date: 12/11/08 6pm duration :21 Amanda Rosseter

A Clarke County grand jury has cleared a University of Georgia math professor of any wrong-doing. Jurors refused to indict Shuzhou Wang for threatening to kill a Cedar Shoals high school official during a PTA meeting last year. Wang admitted to making threats while discussing the education of his two disabled children. The grand jury agreed he didn't intend to hurt anyone.

Georgia's Retired Teachers Pensions Safe

Date: 11/20/08 07:07:34 duration :30 Carol Sbarge

This morning, the benefits for Georgia's retired teachers are safe. Wednesday, the state retirement system's board decided *not* to change the amount paid out to retirees each year. More than 100 retired teachers showed up for the meeting. Cynthia Sloan, retired teacher: "The idea of them trying to take what they have promised – and the cost of living would discourage those teachers who could really make a difference in society with our children." Governor Perdue said the fund is a huge obligation to the state – at about half a billion dollars a year.

Saturday School Proposed in DeKalb

Date: 12/31/08 5pm duration 1:58 Jodie Fleisher

Ask any middle schooler if they'd like to go to school on Saturday and you might hear some groaning, if they even answer. But Hunter Banks is not like most sixth graders. Hunter: "I would think it's a great idea to get more help cause not all teachers can help you on school weeks." And Hunter says he learns better one-on-one. Or in the case of Saturday school – twelve-on-one – much smaller than the 20 or 30 students in an everyday class. And that's important as they study relentlessly for the ever-stressful Criterion Referenced Competency Test. It's a mouthful, and you definitely don't want to choke when you take it. "Teachers keep going on and on about CRCT and how if you don't pass you're gonna stay back another grade. Nobody wants that huh? No." Nicole's family will try hard to enroll her. Three hours on Saturday mornings for ten weeks, leading up to the test. "We really want to make sure she has the best opportunities to be prepared for the test." But in this economy it will be tough. The \$360 dollar tuition pays for the teachers and books. Single mom Linda Bowens scraped and sacrificed so her son Joshua could go last year. "It's very tough, but my son's education is the most important." He raised his grades, and actually enjoys school now. "I'm kind of glad I went to that Saturday school, cause it helped me a lot." But math teacher Jennifer Owens has learned that the answers aren't always equal. "It's so critical all of my students need help especially those who can't afford it, they're the ones who need it the most." Which is where

you come in. Saturday school is hoping the community will teach these kids a new lesson about giving. "You can never go wrong with investing in children." This year the program director is trying to offer scholarships, so kids like Joshua, Nicole, Hunter and anyone else who wants to, can attend. Regardless of whether they can afford it. "I think that's a good idea, because everybody needs a little help." "Kids should be able to come to school and learn whenever they want I think"

Gwinnett School Board Under Fire from Teachers, Parents

Date: 12/11/08 11pm duration 1:17 Eric Philips

The Gwinnett County Board of Education became a verbal punching bag during the public hearing with parents and teachers throwing the critical blows. "You give us little bits of information. It's cloaked in secrecy and yet we're not supposed to come here and ask you questions." The room was packed with concern about the so-called IE-Squared partnership contract that Gwinnett County is working to negotiate with the state. Under the plan, school officials are asking for flexibility from the state in about a dozen key areas from class sizes to teacher salaries – in an effort to better direct funds in these budget challenged times. "If we were able to add just one student to every class, it would save this district over 30 million dollars, we could do a lot for students with 30 million dollars." What grates on many of those here is the fact that they feel they've been left out of the loop regarding changes that will affect their lives.

Date: 12/17/08 18:22:10 duration John Pruitt

Georgia's largest school district wants to come out from under state mandates ... and it's taken steps today to do just that. The Gwinnett County board approved a plan this morning that would free the system from mandates on things like class size and teacher pay. But in return, schools would have to meet performance goals or could face penalties. While this plan has opposition from some teachers and parents, school board members say it will give the district a lot of flexibility. Mary Kay Murphy: "We're stepping aside and making it possible for the local school to make the decision and I think at the heart of it is, we have to have trust. We truly must trust each other." But some teachers and parents say they don't have enough information about this plan ... and they're worried what it could mean down the road. The State Board of Education must still approve it.

DeKalb Elementary School Closed for Unsafe Conditions

Date: 10/24/08 12:07:16 duration 1:16 John Bachman

Dr. Letitia Cantrell, parent: "I think it's a sick building." Parents suspect mold. Dr. Letitia Cantrell says her daughter has asthma attacks inside her classroom at Murphey Candler Elementary school in DeKalb County. Cantrell: "As the kids would say, 'Mommy things are falling through the ceiling. It's raining in the classroom.'" After school Friday, those classrooms will be closed off ... as crews work to repair the roof at Murphey Candler, DeKalb county School Superintendent Dr. Crawford Lewis: "We're going to take your babies out of here." And it's going to get expensive. "I would be surprised if it doesn't cost us a couple million dollars to do all the things we need to do." Starting Monday, the district will bus the students 15 miles to Terry Mill Elementary so crews can tear apart Murphey Candler to test and clean for mold. Thursday night, crews scrubbed Terry Mill getting the building – which sat empty for a year, ready for students on Monday. Murphey Candler parents say they've been complaining about health risks for weeks if not months. The Superintendent says he just found out about it. Parent: "We knew. And all the parents in the school knew, teachers knew, so I'm unclear how he didn't know."

Alpharetta School Re-Zoning Raises Concerns

Date: 11/14/08 12pm duration 1:05 John Bachman

Change is coming to North Fulton Elementary Schools, and anxious parents packed the Milton Center gymnasium to learn what it means for their students. Growth in the county spawned a new elementary school set to open next year. To fill it, and to ease overcrowding at other schools, Fulton County officials will pull as many as 5,000 students from a dozen elementary schools west of Georgia 400. The shuffle isn't sitting well for some. Yvonne Latorre, Parent: "We bought in our neighborhood so our children could attend Crabapple Crossing, Northwestern Middle School, and Milton High School." Yvonne Latorre's neighborhood would move schools in all three plans. Susan Hale, Fulton School District: "This process is very tough for parents. Parents are extremely emotional about their children and want them to go to the best schools possible. WE know these plans are not going to be perfect in every situation." Parents voiced their concerns in small groups, but what was good for some was bad for others. Parent Mark Hilderbrandt: "It's tough. There are a lot of communities involved, so everyone is going to have to sacrifice something to get this done right."

City Rec Centers to Close

Date: 12/06/08 6am duration 1:26 Tom Regan

Every afternoon this Rec Center is filled with kids playing until their parents get off work. They can do homework, or even learn how to plant a beautiful garden in the back. It's a place to grow. Amelia Mitchell is one of the many parents who call it a nurturing haven for kids young and old. Mitchell: "This is a great place for kids to come every day, when they don't have any place to go." But this Rec Center, and 20 others in Atlanta, are getting squeezed by the city's budget crunch. These nine centers make up a partial list of those that will close at month's end. Dianne Harnell Cohen, Parks Commissioner: "It's sad for us, it's very sad for us because our mission every day is to serve the public and these children and our staff comes to work committed and passionate about doing that." The Commissioner of Parks and Recreation told me over a hundred employees are being laid off as a result of a \$2 million dollar budget cut. She says several rec centers in various stages of renovation will be among those closed. The Rec Centers provide a secure, fun and stimulating environment for thousands of children. Civic leaders say they play a key role in keeping young adults out of trouble. Sharon Collins, Civic Assoc President: "We have no other area for them to participate in any structured activities, and that's just a recipe for disaster." Amelia Mitchell: "Everybody loves the Dunbar Center – the diversity of activities. If they shut it down, there won't be anywhere for people to go after hours, after school."

Henry County Teacher Feels Wrongly Accused

Date: 11/13/08 06:18:47 duration :34 Fred Blankenship

One metro Atlanta teacher believes school officials have wrongly accused her of breaking the rules. Makisha Boddie is a 3rd Grade teacher at Rock Spring elementary school in Henry County. Last week she posted a picture of Barack Obama in her classroom to use as a teaching tool. School system officials told her that violated policy against political advertising. Boddie: "There is nothing in there that states that you cannot have a president or president elect posted in your classroom. School officials say the teacher cannot single out the President-elect. Now she has the pictures of the other Presidents too."

Atlanta Proposes Closure of Magnet Schools

Date: 12/08/08 23:00:28 duration :21 Monica Pearson

The Atlanta School System is doing away with the magnet school programs at its high schools. Parents of Douglass High School students say they don't like the idea ... even though the school board says it'll make the school better. Richard Elliot is live with details.

Date: 12/09/08 13:23:04 duration :35 Justin Farmer

Some Atlanta parents are angry over plans to *eliminate* the magnet programs at local high schools. Parents of students at Douglass High School vented their frustrations last night. The district has proposed replacing magnet programs with something called "small learning communities." The Superintendent says the change will boost graduation rates and help more students. But not everyone is buying it. "To dissolve the magnet program will add to the continual stripping away of the legacy and spirit of Douglass High School." Douglass currently has engineering and fine arts magnet programs.

Parents, Students Protest School ReZoning Plan

Date: 11/19/08 17:40:04 duration :35 John Pruitt

Dozens of North Fulton County parents and their children joined together to protest school re-districting plans. They held a "walk home from school" protest ... by walking from Cogburn Woods Elementary School to their nearby subdivisions. Last week, the parents got their first look at three different plans to shift hundreds of elementary students. Thomas Bose, Coventry Neighborhood Association: "plan b is the only one that fits the criteria we feel like... it keeps us in our neighborhood, we're a half mile away and it's crazy to send us far away." A new elementary school is set to open in Milton next year. Hundreds of students will be shuffled to fill it, and to ease overcrowding at other schools.

Georgia Families Face Mounting Health Insurance Costs

Date: 10/15/08 6am duration :22 Fred Blankenship

A new report shows many Georgia families are struggling to make ends meet. Researchers found 30% of the state's working families are working poor. Georgia ranks 32nd when compared to other states. Forty percent of the state's working families also have at least one parent without health insurance. Across the US, 42 million children and adults do not earn enough to meet their basic needs.

Date: 10/23/08 5pm duration :20 Justin Farmer

A new report shows it's getting harder for Georgia families to afford health insurance. "Families USA" analyzed data from 2000 to 2007. Health care premiums in Georgia rose from \$6600 dollars a year to more than \$11,400 dollars a year. That's a 73% increase! During that same period, Georgians incomes only rose 10%.

Peachcare Fraud Strains System

Date: 11/11/08 5pm duration 2:36 Richard Belcher

Georgia's Peachcare Program will spend hundreds of millions of dollars on health for children this year. But everyone in state government knows there's not enough money to go around if people who shouldn't participate are allowed to slip in. There's no excuse ever for gaming the system, and we as public policy makers have to ensure that the integrity of the program is protected. Now, meet Tina Petereit, a north Georgia woman who managed to have her children on Peachcare in years in which tax documents show her gross earnings were \$54,000 dollars, \$65,000 dollars and \$144,000 dollars – plus child support in each of those years. When we questioned her in early September, she didn't dispute our findings. Here we have, as of August 4th, a memo that she's [still on Peachcare]. "Yes, all of the children are still covered as of 8-4." That date is important because on June 20, Petereit's former husband wrote this letter to the Department of Community Health to complain that she had the children in a health insurance program for the working poor when her income far exceeded the maximum – which is slightly under \$50,000 dollars. And we know that Ms. Petereit kept the children on Peachcare until September 1 – about 10 weeks after the state was notified of her alleged fraud. The Department of Community Health acknowledges that Ms. Petereit is now under investigation but will not discuss the case. The department's inspector general was allowed to talk to us about fraud investigations in general. "How long does it normally take you from allegation to making a decision – 'yes' or 'no' – on alleged fraud?" Inspector General: "Typical time frame that we look at for either determining something is substantiated or unsubstantiated is about two weeks." All the Inspector General could tell us is getting cheats out of the system is important. Inspector General: "Every single taxpayer dollar in these programs that is utilized via fraud or inappropriately, is one less tax dollar for somebody that's truly in need." With the state facing excruciating budget cuts, Lt. Governor Casey Cagle agrees. Cagle: "We've got to make sure that those that can legitimately afford to insure children should be able to do it, should be held accountable to it, and the government taxpayer funds should not be used to engage in that activity.

Chemical Component of Baby Bottles Could Prove Toxic

Date: 11/01/08 5am duration 1:23 Jim Strickland

Three-year-old Arianna Smith has a sensory integration disorder. Her six-year-old brother is mildly autistic. Their mom fed each of the with bottles like these. They contain BPA. BPA is added to some rigid plastics. It's linked in some studies to several health problems. "As parents we're supposed to take care of them, and to hear that we could be possibly poisoning our own children. That bothered me." Martinez-Smith is one of four Georgia moms who've filed suit alleging the bottle makers knew of an increased risk of harm to infants. The suit charges the companies with evil motives, and reckless indifference. "I don't believe 'em. I don't believe that it's safe." There's only suspicion that Arianna's challenges are directly linked to BPA. Still, Martinez-Smith doesn't couch her feelings about the FDA endorsing the chemical. "I'm mad. I'm not surprised, but I'm mad, because we're supposed to be this great country, and you'd think they'd care a lot more about the people." This Georgia lawsuit and nearly a dozen like it, have now been consolidated in a federal court in Missouri. Parents want a judge to decide whether the bottle makers failed to warn parents of any potential for harm.

Downturn in Elective Surgeries Puts Financial Strain on All Hospital Care

Date: 11/12/08 6pm

duration 1:19

Diana Davis

The health care industry once seemed recession proof – not any more. The Georgia Hospital Association says more local patients are delaying or cancelling non-emergency surgeries. Kevin Bloye, Ga Hospital Association: “Hernia repair, knee replacement operations – surgeries such as that. The kind of procedures you can live with pain for a while.” It’s those elective procedures that are hospital’s bread and butter. Bloye: “We use these procedures, those elective procedures, to help offset the cost of caring for the uninsured. When those revenues dry up, it makes it extremely difficult for hospitals to continue.” Dr. Brian Howard, surgeon: “All hospitals are having closed door meetings at this point to find out how to best deal with the market. They are looking at layoffs; they’re looking at restructuring plans.” Even patients with relatively good insurance and jobs are reluctant to schedule some procedures and take time off from work. While the drop off in hospital admissions is relatively slight, so far all industry insiders worry it may get worse as more people lose their jobs, insurance, or face higher out-of-pocket costs. Bloye: “We’re seeing hospitals have to make tough decisions – to lay off staff. We’re seeing that throughout the state.” That could plunge historically healthy hospitals in critical financial condition.

More Seeking Homeless Shelter Services

Date: 12/22/08 17:09:24 duration 1:01

Pam Martin

It's a familiar sight at Pine and Peachtree street -- men who need help, gathering at the homeless shelter. Part of the shelter's water is off right now, but they have enough water service in enough bathrooms to stay open. Anita Beatty: "We have a lot of money to pay, yes we do." Shelter Executive Director Anita Beatty says they owe \$150 thousand dollars to the water department, close to \$1 million dollars to two other creditors. When we get money we pay our bills. This is the day service center, people here are looking for jobs and other help. Beatty says last year they served 50 people a day here, this year - 100 Beatty: "The city has intentionally hurt us. The city wants to close this place down. It's not because we are not doing the service we say we are doing, but because we are on Peachtree Street. The controversy between the city and the task force is in court. This court order requires the task force to make payments on its water bill, but also secures city documents concerning the shelter for possible future court action.

Cut-Back of City Services Has Domino Effect in Small Towns

Date: 10/10/08 11pm

duration 1:15

John Bachman

More traffic means more potential customers inside Christine Blight's store. But that traffic could drip in the next two or three years...Woodstock city leaders want to move city hall out of downtown while they build a bigger building. Blight: "We can't lose any little bit of our economy at this point. Every little tiny thread is extremely important." Blight says losing as many as 80 employees and the visitors to City Hall will be bad for downtown businesses ... especially the four new arrivals expected to open by the time the city starts moving out in January. Blight: "Six months is a long time. Six months is a make it or break it. Two years could be long gone history at this point." Jeff Moon, Woodstock City Manager: "I do understand that it would be a concern for them. The issue we still face is the long-term logistical problems we have with these buildings and the fact we have to go somewhere while we rebuild on this site." Moon says Woodstock outgrew City Hall a while ago. That's why the city is scheduled to close on this building on the edge of town in two weeks. They're building it for \$5.6 million dollars. The plan is to build a bigger city hall downtown by 2012. Business owners say that's a long time to stay on track. Moon: "I don't think there's a single restaurant downtown making it or breaking it on city employees eating there every day."

Consumer Advice Related to Closure of Area Car Dealerships

Date: 10/23/08 5pm

duration 1:35

Jim Strickland

The closure of two more metro dealerships brings a stunning piece of advice from the governor's office of consumer affairs. Trading in a car is so risky these days, it's better to sell it yourself. There may be 10-20% of car dealers go under this year. When they go under, you don't know if they paid their debts or not. The debts for Premier Chrysler Dodge in Decatur are staggering. We found court documents where Bank of America claims the store owes the bank \$10.5 million dollars. The bank says a sister dealership in Gwinnett owes another \$6.7 million. Bank of America lent the dealerships the money to stock new cars. Jerry Townsend bought one of them and did one of those tricky trade-ins. Townsend: "This car, the payment's due on it now. Ford says I've got two payments on the other car. I can't afford to pay for both." He found out too late that the dealership never paid off his Ford Mountaineer. He found it sitting on the Decatur lot. His credit's already taken a hit. Townsend: "They have already turned me in on my credit for being 30 days late on the one payment." A Bank of America attorney gave him little information, and wouldn't even talk to us. "It's just kind of sad that dealers are getting away with this. I know I'm not the only one, and it upsets me that they can take people's money basically."

Date: 11/18/08 6pm

duration :41

John Pruitt

A Georgia Chrysler dealer is one of nearly three dozen lobbying congress to approve a \$25 billion dollar auto bailout. Cass Birch is in Washington with 33 other Chrysler dealers. He says the big three automakers are *just* as crucial to the nation's economy as banks. And the bailout would save jobs here in Georgia. Cass Birch: "Georgia, we have a lot of dealers that employ hundreds of thousands of people and they all count on it as a livelihood. The automobile industry has about a 20 percent impact on the total economy, so if you want to improve the economy, you want to jump start sales, the car industry can have a 20 percent impact on that." Birch met today with staffers for Senators Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson. Isakson is opposed to the bailout.

Economic Factors Weigh Heavily in Senate Race

Date: 11/20/08 6pm

duration 1:26

Lori Geary

Noble Rogers: "I've been working here at Simmons for 22 years." Noble Rogers will be out of a job tomorrow when this Mableton mattress factory shuts its doors for good. Rogers: "It's hard getting up in the morning and having nowhere to go." Jim Martin: "Saxby Chambliss should ask the workers at this plant what a recession means because they know that ... he's out of touch." Democrat Jim Martin uses the Simmons Mattress factory as a backdrop ... trying to convince voters why they should choose him over Republican incumbent Saxby Chambliss in what has turned out to be a high stakes run-off nationwide. A win for Martin could get Democrats close to a filibuster-proof majority. Chambliss was travelling in South Georgia today but Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell told me via satellite Martin would give the Obama administration a blank check. McConnell: "We certainly have a slow economy, no question about that. The question is how do you get out of that? I don't think a big tax increase which Martin has a history of." Matt Towery: "For a Democrat to win statewide, normally the African American vote needs to be closer to 30%. Twenty three percent of the early voters so far are African American, 74% are white. Towery: "This race boils down to one thing – does Barack Obama want to get engaged and come to Georgia?" Martin: "We don't know if he's coming down or not, but he's helping us in our campaign." Towery: "We see the early voting numbers, that's pretty clear evidence that the Obama troops aren't getting the job done, it's just that simple. It's going to take Barack Obama."

Georgia Unemployment Numbers on the Rise

Date: 10/11/08 5am

duration :23

Amanda Rosseter

We have more bad news about Georgia's economy – unemployment is up. The State Department of Labor announced more than 56,000 laid-off workers filed for unemployment insurance benefits last month. That's up 76% from September of 2007. And for the first nine months of this year, more than 466,000 people filed for unemployment. That's an increase of more than 38% from the same period last year.

Date: 12/31/08 15:51:28 duration 1:30

Fred Blankenship

Jozannah Khazan spent his final day of 2008 at the last place he expected – the Department of Labor, researching unemployment benefits. Recently laid off from an account executive position at AT&T, he is hopeful for better days ahead in '09. Khazan: "...but it is pretty much a sign of the times and the state of affairs that is going on due to the economy." An economy frankly in the tank and according to Georgia Department of Labor – job losses are set to skyrocket in the new year. Labor Commissioner Michael Thurmond: "Clearly the first six months of 2009 will be much more difficult than what we have faced already." Commissioner Thurmond says he is seeing mass layoffs at a rate of two to three times a day. Unemployment in Georgia is now 7.5% - roughly 350,000 people out of work. The 2009 projections? Simply depressing. Thurmond: "We will have double digit unemployment in Georgia. The unemployment rate could reach 10%." Jobs in the retail industry may be first on the chopping block. Holiday shopping numbers are dismal. Dorian Usherwood was downsized just a few weeks ago. He's not worried, but he fears others aren't so fortunate.

Economic Forecast

Date: 11/19/08 5pm

duration :28

John Pruitt

One of Georgia's top economists is predicting *more* job losses in the coming year, leading to a much higher unemployment rate in Georgia. Rajeev Dhawan: "Comparing the numbers from year ago 4 1/2 -5.. it is going to go up to eight percent plus. 3 million jobs gone. 3 million more people coming into the work force that causes the number to go up" Dhawan is Director of the Economic Forecasting Center at Georgia State University. He says while we may see "anemic" growth next year, real recovery is two years away.

Date: 12/07/08 9am

duration :35

Amanda Rosseter

A leading economist warns Georgia faces the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. 2009 could bring 175,000 more job cuts. Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue is warning state agencies that budget cuts could go even deeper: 8% across the board. And state layoffs may be inevitable. The dean of UGA's business school predicts Georgia's unemployment rate will peak in early 2010 at 9%. Dean Robert Sumichrast: "Every form of tax revenue that you can imagine is going to be down over the next several months." The Chief Executive Officer of Forbes, Steve Forbes, suggests we could get the housing market going again by offering fixed 5% mortgages.

Governor Proposes Economic Stimulus Package

Date: 12/09/08 6pm

duration 1:15

Lori Geary

Governor Perdue: "We will stimulate this economy based on long-term investments in things that we need." Governor Sonny Perdue says he's come up with a way to boost Georgia's economy – an aggressive bond package to fund projects including road constructions and new facilities at schools and colleges. Perdue: "It will have two effects. It will put people to work but it will also be things that over the life cycle of that asset be used to stimulate the economy and provide more for the state." Georgia's revenue figures just announced for the month of November actually show a slight increase of more than 1% compared to November of last year because individual income tax collections rose almost 4% ... but sales tax declined – a clear indication consumers are holding on to their money. Year-to-date, revenue collections are down – suggesting a shortfall of about \$1.6 billion dollars. Perdue: "We gotta deal with the reality of where we are today." Democrats say they fear the Governor will try and do away with the \$450 million dollar Homestead exemption... which they call a backdoor tax on every homeowner in Georgia. Dubose Porter: "If he does not fund the Homestead Refund, he will be implementing the largest tax increase in Georgia's history. You can't just defer that by saying we're going to build something later." Perdue: "We're cash poor, but we've got good credit."

Georgia In Top Ten of National "Underwater" Mortgage Numbers

Date: 10/31/08 18:56:16 duration :45

John Pruitt

New data out today shows Georgia is one of the top six states where homeowners owe more on their mortgages than their house is worth. A combination of a slowing economy, adjustable rate and zero-down mortgages, refinancing and income loss is what is being blamed for the problem. The report released by First American Core Logic shows six states account for nearly 60% of all homeowners who are what they call "underwater" on their mortgages. The percentage of "underwater" mortgages is 23% here in Georgia. Experts tell us if you can, ride out the market, negotiate with your lender or hope a government refinancing plan takes shape to provide relief to troubled homeowners.

Date: 11/01/08 12pm

duration :28

Anissa Centers

The staggering scope of the housing recession is seen in a new report out this week. It shows that in one of nearly every three homes in Georgia, the mortgage is more than the properties are worth. Georgia is one of six states where nearly 60% of all homeowners are what they call "underwater" on their mortgages. In a slowing economy it doesn't take a lot to push an underwater mortgage into default. Adjustable rate or zero down mortgages, refinancing or a hit in income can sink a homeowner.

Governor's "Go Fish" Program Seen as Extravagant

Date: 12/11/08 6pm

duration :19

Lori Geary

During the midst of a state budget crisis, Governor Sonny Perdue's "Go Fish" program has hooked more than a few critics who question his priorities. Construction is now underway on a \$23 million dollar fishing attraction in Houston County. This muddy track of land at the popular National Fairgrounds in Perry, Georgia will soon be home to a fisherman's dream. Construction is underway on the 30,000 square foot "Go Fish" center in Governor Perdue's home county of Houston. It will feature a fish hatchery and public fishing ponds. Senator Robert Brown: "Sporting is more important than education? [During the midst of a budget crisis] I think it sends a very bad message." The governor's critics say they're not hooked on a fish center that will cost taxpayers \$23 million dollars. The state is spending \$19 million dollars on the "Go Fish" program. Fourteen million in bonds will go directly to the center in Perry. Another \$5 million will be spent on boat ramps throughout Georgia to attract high profile fishing tournaments. Governor Perdue: "The 'Go Fish' program you can think of as economic stimulus package two years ahead of its time ... I'm proud of it." Governor Perdue defended his decision to go forward with the program even though he has put state agencies on alert for 8% budget cuts across the board. Brown: "I don't think it's a very wise investment because the economy is going in a direction that suggests we're gonna have less leisure dollars to spend." Governor: "This money was done in '07, so it has nothing to do with this budget, we can't recover any of that money at this point in time, so those people who are talking about "Go Fish" while we're having to constrain our cash budget are simply trying to make political hay." Brown: "As much as we disagree, I was taking him at his word that he's fiscally conservative."

Snow Park Solves Water Waste Dilemma

Date: 12/27/08 04:26:29 duration 1:20

Lori Geary

This looks like a scene out of the northeast, or perhaps Colorado or Utah. But through all that snow, you'll see the familiar carving of Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis. Kelley Swann: "We're able to blow 200 tons of snow a day if we need to." You may recall folks here tried to build Snow Mountain last year. But that was during the unprecedented drought and they were going to use DeKalb County water. This year, they have a whole new system. Kelley: "Pull water from the lake, filtrate it and then the snow will actually melt and go back into the lake." Paul: "We started to make the snow just before Thanksgiving." I was able to get a behind-the-scenes tour of this brand new water filtering system. Instead of using a million gallons of tap water, water is now pumped from the lake at Stone Mountain to make the snow. Paul: "We send it to a holding tank on the other side where we do a secondary disinfection of the water just to make it safe. And then we send it out to the snow plant where the magic happens and we turn the water into snow." Take a look at the results. All this snowmaking could fill up three football fields! It will soon open to kids and adults with a 400 foot tubing hill and a 30,000 square foot play area. Kelly: "It is a far cry from last year when it was a great idea with bad timing. The controversy has definitely melted."

Good News on City Sewer Project

Date: 11/09/08 11pm

duration :33

John Pruitt

It came in under budget, and it's good for the environment. Atlanta City Hall will be celebrating the completion of a brand new sewer overflow tunnel tomorrow. The tunnel will reduce sewage overflow into the Chattahoochee and nearby streams, and improve water quality for Atlanta residents. Robert Hunter: "We're about halfway done with the program and we are going to take a little time to celebrate that success and then get back to improving the system and improving the city." The project cost almost a quarter billion dollars less than the \$1 billion dollar price tag.

Cobb Employees Shortened Work Week Could Improve Area Air Quality

Date: 10/30/08 04:30:27 duration :24

Carol Sbarge

The morning commute will soon be less of a concern for some city of Atlanta employees, at least for one day each week. A "work from home" program will start in January. Employees will either work 10-hour days for four days a week; or work from home at least one day a week. City officials believe the plans will result in less driving, which improves air quality. They hope to also reduce the energy and water used in city buildings.

The Nuclear Power Debate

Date: 11/03/08 5pm

duration 1:34

Diana Davis

Barbara Antonopolos: "Nuclear power still is highly dangerous, very expensive, and toxic to life on earth." It's clear Georgia is hungry for electrical power. At this first public service commission public hearing, it's also clear the debate over how that power should be generated can get emotional. Janis Mathis: "If we don't include nuclear, then we are looking probably at coal, and coal is getting more difficult both legally and politically." Antonopolos: "There is no way to factor out the potential for a catastrophic nuclear disaster." Georgia Power says expanding its existing nuclear power plant Vogtle from two reactors to four will help meet Georgia's increasing power needs. Jeffrey Wilson, Georgia Power: "We need thousands of megawatts over the next ten years. Georgia is a fast growing state, and we expect that to continue." Many at this public hearing say more should be done to encourage energy efficiency and conservation and to develop alternative sources including wind and solar. Partry Durnd, Sierra Club: "The failure of energy efficiency programs is unconscionable. We won't need these two expansions if we properly address that issue." Safety also a major concern. This woman lived downwind of 3-Mile-Island during the 1979 accident there. Patricia Carter: "I gave up and I left in frustration but there's no escape. The existing reactor at Plant Vogtle went online in 1989. Georgia Power says it has been and always will be safe. Jeffrey Wilson: "Plant Vogtle's safety record is excellent. We expect that to continue." This is only the first in a round of public hearings on the plant expansion. The PSC won't make a final decision until March.

Transportation Vote

Date: 12/03/08 5am

duration :30

Fred Blankenship

In just a few hours, we'll be watching for a vote on a major transit expansion. The Atlanta Regional Commission is considering the "Concept Three" plan. It includes express buses, street cars, and portions of the Macon-Atlanta-Athens "Brain Train" route. Supporters believe the Concept Three plan would help fight traffic congestion and reduce air pollution. Approval today would bring the transit projects into the regional transportation plan, which is needed for federal funding. The vote is on this afternoon.

Gwinnett Residents Shine Light on Dangerous Intersection

Date: 12/09/08 5pm

duration: 1:12

Rachel Kim

Ron Childress is pretty good with a video camera since he investigates accidents for a living. But for the past several years, he says he's recorded one too many right outside his door along Sugarloaf parkway. Resident Childress: "For a period of time there, there was one just about every month and sometimes two a month. And in the case of last week, there were two in two days." This was the scene Sunday, November 30. A head-on crash after one driver couldn't make the curve and crossed over the median. Childress and other residents who live off this stretch of Sugarloaf Parkway say the curve is sharp and poorly designed. They say the speeding on top of the blind curve is dangerous for drivers and for them. Jacob Chandler's wife was hospitalized after trying to leave her subdivision. "She was pulling out, some guy was going too fast and hit her, t-boned her, knocked her all the way down probably about 100 yards." Because of these concerns, the Gwinnett Dept of Transportation put up two warning signs and repaved southbound lanes to increase traction. Childress: "They came out and repaved it and said that was going to fix the problem. But weekly, I hear cars sliding, I hear them hit the center divider." Many residents want the curve redesigned or see other changes soon. Concerned resident Jacob Chandler: "I think some traffic lights would definitely be a plus." Childress: "Sooner or later, it's going to be deadly."

Red Light Cameras: Lifesaver or Moneymaker?

Date: 12/24/08 5pm

duration 2:00

John Bachman

Lifesavers, or money makers – cameras mounted at intersections catch drivers running red lights. In 2006, the cameras at this intersection in Marietta handed out 27,000 red light tickets at \$70 dollars apiece..for a total of \$1.9 million dollars. Russell Longcore, ticketed driver: "Doesn't surprise me at all. I think the installation of cameras was a revenue enhancer for Marietta, and never had anything to do with safety." Critics say red light cameras infringe on people's rights; supporters say they help protect them." Think about this: there were 47 deaths or serious injuries at this Riverdale intersection in the three years before the city installed cameras. The next year: not one. *Chief Samuel Patterson/Riverdale Police Department*: "Might've just gotten lucky. But you know, if you look at 2003, 2004, 2005, we didn't get lucky. 2006, either we got lucky, or the red light camera caused people to slow down and stop." So which is it? Lifesaver, or moneymaker? I could be both. But a new law that takes effect in the new year is designed to take a side. *Rep. Barry Loudermilk*: "They're going to have to show that the cameras they're putting in are for safety purposes, not for revenue purposes." Starting in 2009, cities need a permit from the DOT to install the cameras. To get that permit, cities will need to meet several safety guidelines. And another important change: if cities do get cameras, they will have to add a second to the yellow light. Giving drivers more time to make a decision and avoid a ticket. Representative Barry Loudermilk says the new law will change the focus of the cameras to safety. Chief Samuel Patterson says it's already there. Loudermilk: "We didn't do this for the money. We did this to reduce those 19 serious injuries and fatalities in 2003 down to zero in 2006."

Atlanta's Traffic Problems Could Discourage New Business

Date: 11/13/08 6PM

duration :22

Justin Farmer

A new report shows metro Atlanta could lose out on jobs and money unless it does something about traffic. Consultants presented the study to the state transportation board today. It warns traffic tie-ups and lack of access to reliable transportation – could make Atlanta a less attractive market for employers. The study found relieving congestion could create 230,000 jobs over 30 years.

Date: 11/23/08 6pm

duration :20

Lori Geary

What to do about traffic around Atlanta? Business and government leaders from across Georgia will meet Monday to discuss improvements in the area's transportation systems. The conference is sponsored by the "Get Georgia Moving" coalition. Leaders are expected to talk about how to balance the need for new roads while jump-starting Georgia's economic growth.

Regional Commission to Vote on Transportation Plan

Date: 12/03/08 5am

duration :30

Fred Blankenship

In just a few hours, we'll be watching for a vote on a major transit expansion. The Atlanta Regional Commission is considering the "Concept Three" plan. It includes express buses, street cars, and portions of the Macon-Atlant-Athens "brain train" route. Supporters believe the Concept Three plan would help fight traffic congetion andreduce air pollution. Approval today would bring the transit projects into the regional transportation plan, which is needed for federal funding. The vote is this afternoon.

Beltline Clean Up Effort

Date: 11/07/08 6am duration :26 Fred Blankenship

This weekend two Atlanta City Council Members are inviting the public to join in on a little community service. It's the Beltline Cleanup! And it's happening from 8:30 tomorrow morning until around noon. Volunteers will spread out across the northeast corridor of the Beltline picking up debris. The 1.5 mile cleanup area is between Monroe Drive and Highland Avenue. For information about becoming a volunteer, go to WSBTV.com and click on the news link.

Proposed "HOT Lanes" are Controversial

Date: 11/25/08 5pm duration 1:29 Lori Geary

You're looking at the busiest HOV lane travelled in the state. It's on I-85 between Old Peachtree Road and I-285, and it's about to become a high occupancy toll lane. Single drivers or those with one passenger will soon be able to use it for a fee. Terry Hall: "The people who don't have money won't be able to so if I'm rich and I got money I can drive that lane and get my commute to my high paying drive." Matthew Green: "Paying again for something you've already paid for ... doesn't make sense." The HOT land idea got a cold reaction from several drivers we talked to, but it's a done deal. Geary: "If there's a lot of public outcry of people not wanting these, will you change your decision? Gena Evans: "No. We do not intend to change our decision on the HOT lanes." In fact, DOT Secretary Mary Peters was in metro Atlanta with a \$110 million dollar check to get the project started. Peters: "The new HOT land prices will vary by the time of day, by the amount of traffic on those lanes, so they can be kept free flowing." Electronic signs would give drivers a heads-up on the price. Evans: "It will check you coming in and check you leaving so you will get an electronic bill from that movement in and out of those lanes. State leaders say they're still working out pricing details on the HOT lanes. In southern California, drivers can pay up to \$1.00 per mile, that's why many have deemed them "Lexus Lanes." Evans: "The vehicles most seen in the HOT lanes across the country is a Ford, not a Mercedes, not a BMW.

Obama Sign Controversy at Kennesaw State Dorm

Date: 10/24/08 11pm

duration :18

John Pruitt

A Kennesaw State University student says the school is squashing her political freedom of speech. Kat Dixon put up a Barack Obama sign in her dorm window. But KSU housing officials sent her warnings. They say any sign violates school policy to post anything in windows. The only exception is during the holiday season. Dixon has a disciplinary hearing with the authority next week. Some students and faculty plan to go to support her.

Paintball Vandalism May Have Political Element

Date: 11/05/08 5pm

duration :22

Jovita Moore

LaBarbara Nattiel and her family were watching Barack Obama's acceptance speech together. It really was a glorious time and then boom, boom, boom. It was Nattiel's daughter who realized what was happening. She said, "mom, mom" Paint was everywhere. Dozens of paintball shots covered their house and their carts in bright pink splashes. It was the same story in another part of Legacy Park. Lori Thompson: "Well, initially I was very angry that people reacted that way." Lori Thompson and the others are convinced they were targeted because of their Obama campaign signs. There were at least four homes with Obama signs hit overnight. "It's just sad...it's just really, really sad." Thompson says she'll one day remind her son what happened to describe the unfortunate reaction in their neighborhood on a historic day. I'm going to keep that sign to remember this day."

Date: 11/06/08 5am

duration :22

Fred Blankenship

Kennesaw police want to hear from anyone who knows about some paintball attacks that may be the result of a political grudge. At least four homeowners in the Legacy Park subdivision came out early Wednesday morning to find pink paint splattered on their walls and cars. The homes all had one thing in common – Barack Obama signs. Homeowner: "Initially I was very angry and now I'm just sort of disappointed that people in our neighborhood reacted that way." The most serious damage was done to a car in the neighborhood. Kennesaw police say they do not have any suspects.

Voter ID Law Challenged

Date: 10/26/08 12pm

duration :23

Amanda Rosseter

Voting Rights Groups and government representatives are trying to hammer out a compromise for Georgia's newest voters. The voter advocates say Georgia's decision to check the identities and citizenship records of newly registered voters is illegal. But a federal judge rejected that claim last week. The group went before a three judge panel, which recommended the two sides try to hammer out an agreement.

Republican "Brand" Could be Damaged in Georgia

Date: 11/06/08 5am

duration :35

Fred Blankenship

This morning we are hearing a former state Attorney General's take on Georgia's US Senate race. Mike Bowers tells us the Republican brand has been damaged. And says the fact that incumbent Republican Saxby Chambliss finds himself in a runoff is proof. Bowers: "I think the Republicans have been more focused, but some of that focus has been lost and unity of purpose has been lost." Bowers tells us if Republicans don't get a unified message, their strength will be compromised here in Georgia. But many of the states Republicans believe the Obama effect does not cut deep into Republican strength at the state level.

Early Voting Crush Causes Controversy

Date: 10/29/08 5pm

duration 1:35

Lori Geary

Nancy Valentine: "I waited about 3 ½ hours." These voters at the Frank Bailey Senior Center in Riverdale were prepared with blankets, chairs, and patience. Valentine: "I think I would like to see more machines and more personnel." Elections officials in Clayton County added two more voting booths here for a total of seven after lines topped eight hours on Monday. Similar stories in Fulton prompted the state's Democratic leaders to call on Georgia's Secretary of State to extend the voting hours. Geary: "You called it a crisis, is that overstating it a bit?" Jane: "It sounded like a crisis or pending crisis on Monday when people were standing in line for four hours to vote. Karen Handel (Sec of State): "It really comes across as extraordinary political for these groups to stand up and try to create this kind of hysteria that well could dampen people from coming to the polls. Jane: "It will be or could be a crisis if registered voters are not allowed to vote and not given enough opportunity to vote." But Secretary Handel says early voting started almost 45 days ago in Georgia. Wait times this week are about an hour long state-wide. Handel: "The counties, if they wanted to add locations or change their hours of operation, they would need to contact the Department of Justice to get approval." Geary: "Do you know of anybody that has not been able to vote that wants to? Jane: "We don't know that yet, but I'm trying to prepare. We've known for a year we were going to have record turnout." Voter: "I don't think this should be labeled as a crisis because people take the time out – which is a privilege.

Cobb County Official Paid Voodoo Priestess to Harm Fellow Commissioner

Date: 10/08/08 22:45:46 duration :37

John Pruitt

Lawyers for a Cobb County commissioner tell us, a GBI agent interviewed her today about an alleged trip to South Carolina to see a voodoo priestess. The priestess says commissioner Annette Kesting wanted her to cause the death of Woody Thompson, who defeated her in the primary. Thompson: "There's a dark side of this too, and for somebody to have feelings like that they dislike you so bad that they want to do something to cause your death is disturbing." Kesting told Channel 2 days ago she never hired the voodoo priestess, and she lost her bank book. The priestess says she turned over bounced checks, a money order and some court documents to the GBI.

Oil Pipeline in Cobb Residential Area

Date: 12/17/08 11pm

duration 1:16

Richard Elliot

Jerry Heath shows where the two Colonial Petroleum pipelines run right underneath his property, and have for more than 20 years. They're pumping tens of thousands of gallons a day, just a few feet down. Now Colonial wants to add a third line, and he doesn't mind at all. Beverly Barron has lived in this neighborhood for nearly 40 years. She's never had a problem with the two pipelines either, but now she says she absolutely does not want a third. Colonial says it's perfectly safe, and that there are safeguards in place along with good technology to maintain and monitor the lines. But some neighbors told us off camera, they just don't want that third line running underneath or near their property. Jerry Heath is not one of them. He says if it keeps the petroleum supply moving, it's okay with him.

Dunwoody Billboard Controversy

Date: 12/05/08 12pm

duration :28

Fred Blankenship

The *new* city of Dunwoody is trying to solve one of its first issues. Residents are complaining about this new 500 foot billboard on Chamblee-Dunwoody Road. County officials granted the company the required permits last February. The billboard went up just before Dunwoody officially became a city. Warren Hutmacher: "A lot of residents called in to complain to our offices here concerned about placement size of the billboard." The county says it had *nothing* to do with the timing of the billboard.

DeKalb Neighborhood Feels Steep Rise in Crime

Date: 11/06/08 5pm

duration 1:26

Carol Sbarge

You can't miss the DeKalb officers walking at the Highland Pointe apartments. A week after someone murdered Rodney Turner, Jr. here, police say he was a suspect in an earlier murder. The police presence is great but because something just happened last week that put us in danger we can't really say that the police presence is making a difference because it hasn't been long enough to say it's making a difference. DeKalb Police say since the spring they put what they call an interactive community police force in this neighborhood. Daily, nearly a dozen officers talk to residents, patrol and get to know the community. They also have another team here that focuses on enforcement. Police say it's all led to 50 arrests in the past six months. M.A. Waddleton: "The past three months we've spent 145 man-hours on the beat out here. We are aggressively trying to get the community back together. The complex manager is very cooperative working with us. Tonight, at 7 o'clock, the apartment management is holding a meeting here at the leasing office for people who live in the area to meet with police. Police say one of the big problems is often people are afraid to share anything they know about these crimes. It's possible they are in fear of retaliation that's another reason for the meeting tonight. Bring people together and see if we can get some more leads.

Gwinnett Residents Angered over Trash Service Fees

Date: 11/14/08 7am

duration :44

Amand Rosseter

Some Gwinnett County trash pickup customers are angry over a \$23.00 dollar deactivation fee. Waste industries is charging its customers that fee after it failed to win a new contract with the county. Gwinnett advised existing companies that they could not realize rates before the new plan goes into effect. But that did not stop waste industries from charging that new fee. Resident Connie Wiggins: "I've been on the phone most of yesterday and today with lawyers, the county, and others about things that can be done to assist residents." Waste Industries said the current agreement does not prohibit them from charging the fee.

Date: 12/05/08 12pm

duration :33

Rachel Kim

Today, Gwinnett County says it *cannot* stop trash companies from collecting a "de-activation" fee. The county has decided that *two* haulers only will take over trash services in January. The private companies now providing that service for thousands of homes are charging customers a "de-activation" fee. Those customers are angry, saying they were not the ones who decided to end their service.

Date: 12/10/08 6pm

duration :39

John Pruitt

A judge will now decide if Gwinnett County's new trash pick-up plan will go on as scheduled. Two independent trash collectors say that new plan is unfair and they're asking for an injunction to stop it. The plan is administered by a non-profit company called "Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful." Roy Barnes, the attorney for those trash collectors says the bid process was not legal. The judge in the case may make his final decision Friday afternoon.

Date: 12/11/08 12pm

duration :36

Rachel Kim

A judge could decide in the next 24 hours whether Gwinnett County's new trash plan goes forward. Two independent trash collectors have *sued* to stop the plan. Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful picked up two *others* to pick up trash for all county residents. But the companies who have been providing that service say they never had a shot. Attorney Roy Barnes: "By creating exclusive franchises, having them issued by a non-elected board, and we just think that's wrong. We think there's been an improper delegation of legislative authority." Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful is a non profit company. They insist the goal was to provide good service at the lowest price.

Date: 12/19/08 12:54:13 duration :35

Pam Martin

A judge has now tossed out a controversial garbage plan in Gwinnett County. Now, tens of thousands of homeowners are worried about who will pick up their garbage starting next month. Gwinnett County contracted with a non-profit company to run trash pickup. But a Superior Court judge ruled the plan violates state law. Two private trash haulers claimed that plan unfairly shut them out of the county. Kevin Byrd: "we're going to call and we're going to send notices through the mail and we're going to continue the services we're not going to have an interruption in services." A spokesperson for Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful says the organization is studying the court order and considering legal alternatives.

Gwinnett Lacks "Slumlord" Laws

Date: Sat 10-Oct-98 06:32:49

duration 1:42

Jeff Dore

The children play catch and look cute as can be in a Braves batting helmet. But their ball ground is a trash-filled dead end. They know how it should look. Girl: "see that sign over there? It says 'Keep Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful'." But Gwinnett County doesn't have laws forcing owners to keep property clean or beautiful. Children live in this apartment, where the water heater broke two weeks ago and the carpet is flooded. The vacuum sucks up brown glop in the living room. Why doesn't the landlord clean it up? Girl: "The landlord? Because they don't want to" In another apartment, the ceiling collapsed and the floor is crumbling while roaches run free. The resident is an illegal alien who spoke through an interpreter. Interpreter: "She's talked to the owner and said please come to help me repair the floor." But they don't do it. The Gwinnett County commission is considering a hgroup of ordinances to force landlords to at least keep up the outsides. It would require them to control grass and weeds, tow away junk cars and clean up trash, to make sure stairs and porches are safe, and that walls, roofs and windows are maintained, waterproof and safe. A non-profit agency has bought and renovated some units and the children helped in a neighborhood cleanup. Child: "they painted that picture there." But then someone busted up the mailboxes and someone else trashed them, and the children are back to play8ing in a dump again ... until the county gets the laws to get tough.

Snellville Residents Worry About Proposed Crematory

Date: 10/09/08 6pm

duration :22

Jovita Moore

Snellville city council is considering a proposal that would force a controversial crematory to make a big investment. Council Person Kelly Kautz proposed an ordinance that would require crematories and some hospitals to self-monitor mercury and dioxins. Those air pollution monitoring systems cost about \$250,000 dollars. Snellville's city council is expected to vote on the proposal next Monday.

Homeowners Angered by “No Lights” Restriction

Date: 12/03/08 18:30:52 duration :34

Monica Pearson

This evening, some South Fulton County homeowners are upset over “no lights” landscaping or maintenance. The management company running the homeowners association at the Rosecrest subdivision turned off the lights last month. They told residents, there’s not enough money to pay utility or maintenance bills. The builder left ... after selling far fewer homes than planned. These folks bought a place and were told \$600 dollars a year, \$700 dollars a year. That was if 134 people paid it. In this case 20 maybe 30 homes were sold. The homeowners are hoping to organize their *own* association.

Fire Station Closure Brings Public Safety Concern

Date: 12/05/08 5pm duration :20 Jovita Moore

New developments this hour in the efforts to keep a fire station open. A key meeting is scheduled to start any time now on the closure of Atlanta Fire Station #23. Residents are fighting the move and they now have some allies from families all the way in Ohio. Channel 2's Pam Martin is live at Trinity Presbyterian church, where the meeting will take place.

Date: 12/05/08 11pm duration :30 Monica Pearson

Neighbors concerned about their safety, prepare to meet with Atlanta's Fire Chief tomorrow morning. Chief Kelvin Cochran will explain to residents why Fire Station #23 has to shut down for 6 months. The station is on Howell Mill Road in northwest Atlanta. Residents tell us Station 23 has been shut down and reopened before. Station 23 responded to the Bluffton University bus crash last year. Families of the victims are signing an online petition to save the station.

DeKalb Use of Tasers Debated

Date: 12/03/08 22:51:02 duration :37 Monica Pearson

DeKalb County's police Chief confirms, he plans to ask the county commission for permission to buy taser stun devices with seized drug money! Chief Terrell Bolton says he wants to buy more than a thousand tasers, so every detective and uniformed officer on the street can have one. He said earlier he wanted the money to come from the county's general fund, but that's changed. Bolton: "right now with the violence we're seeing out there on the streets as well as the dire situation we're in with the county budget, we had to reassess." The Chief says he considered the controversy around tasers, but research showed citizens are safer if police have them.

Date: 12/09/08 12pm duration :23 Justin Farmer

In the last hour, the DeKalb County Commission delayed a decision on the return of tasers. Chief Terrell Bolton has proposed using money from seized drug cases to buy tasers for more than 1,000 officers. A grand jury investigating a dozen deadly police shootings recommended the department resume using them. But critics have concerns about safety. The commission now plans to vote on the issue next month.

DeKalb's Public Safety Department Gets Low Marks

Date: 12/19/08 11pm duration 1:17 Ashley Hayes

Inferior, inadequate and needing a new leader ... those are words a 40 person citizen committee used to describe the current state of DeKalb's Public Safety department. Total there are 91 pages made up of 300 suggestions and recommendations typed in a report for new county CEO Burrell Ellis. the committee wasn't recommending they fire employees and other departments be consolidated but that they have a cabinet level manager that can assist with administration with budgetary concerns." The most consistent recommendation is to reinstate a Director of Public Safety, a position dissolved during Vernon Jones' administration. According to the report, this person would answer directly to the CEO while overseeing the police, fire rescue departments, and medical examiner's office. "I think the committee also had a view point that crime is on the increase in DeKalb county public safety is a major problem in the county and I think they want the police department functioning on the core mission of a police dept which is keeping the community safe." Ross believes that is why the committee wants the 9-1-1 center to operate independently from the fire department and the police department, where the center is currently housed. "i don't want to overstate or understate the case i think the report makes it's clear the public safety subcommittee has a lot of concerns about different conditions and issues in the police dept."

Public Safety Furloughs Could Lead to Less Public Safety

Date: 11/21/08 12pm

duration :35

Fred Blankenship

The Atlanta Police Chief is asking the mayor to make his department the "exception" when it comes to budget furloughs. Mayor Shirley Franklin has proposed a four hour a week furlough for all city employees. Chief Richard Pennington says he understands the current budget deficit, but furloughs would hurt his department. "I think it will destroy morale to a certain extent when these officers come in and give their all to the city for over 40 hours a week. and then in some instances give up their lives for the citizens of Atlanta. Atlanta's Fire Chief has similar concerns about proposed furloughs and budget cuts.

Date: 12/02/08 6pm

duration 1:44

Mark Winne

Officer 1: "I've been a police officer 29 years and I really feel for the younger guys here trying to take care of their families – trying to take care of themselves – trying to make an honest living and it's becoming more and more difficult." Officer 2: "This time of year where there's lots more crimes of opportunity, we need to be out there the most." No secret the cost they could pay in a dangerous job, the issue now the city's cost of paying them ... and the cost of cutting hours. Wilkinson: "The Chief and his staff are doing a terrific job in developing an operational plan that will minimize this disruption to police services, but clearly there's no way they can make these cuts without having some sort of impact on the safety and security of this city and ultimately making us less safe. Dave Wilkinson says the Atlanta Police Foundation is supported largely by business people who understand the business decision Mayor Franklin made in furloughing city employees – including police – four hours a week, but the math says cutting that much is bad for the business of crime-fighting. Wilkinson: "I think Mayor Franklin would be the first to tell you it's not good for public safety and crime prevention." He says police vacancies are about a tenth now what they were eight years ago ... crime rate trends are good ... manpower's up, but: (Wilkinson): "I think this stifles this momentum if you will." He says APD's officers are caring and professional, but one of his biggest concerns is officer morale. Officer 1: "Furloughs right now are causing bad morale within the police department." Officer 2: "It's definitely gonna be a lot more stressful."

Atlanta Neighborhood Dives in To Crime Prevention

Date: 12/06/08 11pm

duration 1:22

John Bachman

Foreclosures are up, vandalisms are up, crimes are up ... so homeowners in the Pittsburgh neighborhood are taking a hike. That's right, a walk. LaShawn Hoffman/CEO Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association: "One of our major concerns here is that we want to make sure the community is safe, clean." Hoffman and others are showing each other – and police officers – the trouble spots. "Abandoned houses, open and vacant houses, here's a prime example.. it's been cited by code enforcement..the windows are kicked open the doors, and our children walk past here... this is a walkway to the middle school." James Bridges, homeowner: "James Bridges/Homeowner: "It's really a shame they don't respect property. And it's continuing. I've seen it all over the community. The boarded up homes being burglarized." Some 3,000 people live in this area, but a high percentage of houses are vacant or abandoned. Take a look at this home, empty after a fire, with ashes and mattresses still littering the yard. That's at least part of the reason police say burglaries, thefts, and even car break-ins are all on the rise. "This is a prime example of a negligent homeowner that isn't taking responsibility for his property." The goal for the walk is to get neighbors and police more aware of homes like these. So that everyone can take steps to make the neighborhood safer.

Clarke County Property Crime Numbers Skyrocket

Date: 11/21/08 6am

duration :30

Fred Blankenship

Athens/Clarke County is seeing its worst property crime numbers in more than 30 years. That's why police are meeting with residents to talk about ways they can protect their property and help catch the thieves. Burglars have hit Dyteya Lewis' home three times this year. She doesn't think a bad economy is a good excuse for crime. Lewis "I know times are hard, but you know, you reap what you sow. Everybody's having a hard time. Don't steal from me." Athens/Clarke County police have increased patrols. They are asking residents to call 9-1-1 if they see any suspicious activity.

East Point Residents Demand Answers

Date: 10/21/08 06:08:28 duration :42 Carol Sbarge

We were there during some heated moments in the ongoing controversy involving East Point's Fire Chief. As you can see, several East Point residents showed up at a city meeting last night. They wanted to let council members and the city manager know what they think about the suspension of the fire chief. "It is time for you, *you* to step up to the plate and investigate what's going on." East Point's interim manager suspended fire chief Rosemary Cloud for three days. It came after the city council cut the fire department's budget by 53% and laid off 48 fire fighters. The chief is appealing her suspension to a citizen advisory board. The process could take at least a month.

Clayton County Group Protests Relocation of Historic Graves

Date: 11/25/08 6am duration :22 Carol Sbarge

Happening today in Clayton County, a decision is expected about a graveyard controversy. Families of loved ones buried at the old Union Bethel AME Church cemetery are fighting plans to move more than 300 graves. A dirt recycling company wants to move the graves so it can expand its landfill. County commissioners are planning to vote on the issue today. We'll let you know what they decide.

Date: 12/17/08 12:21:38 duration :32 Fred Blankenship

The NAACP is asking the Clayton County commission to reverse a decision about moving some graves of slaves. Families and civil rights leaders made a new plea during last night's commission meeting. Earlier this month, the board approved a company's request to move 311 graves and rebury them in a Riverdale Cemetery. That company is planning to expand a landfill at the site. Betty Bowden: "At least we could have enough respect, have enough care for our descendants,(sic) to leave the rest of them there." The recycling company says before the controversy no one had visited the graveyard in years.

Judge Orders Muslim Woman to Remove Headscarf Prompting Protest

Date: 12/18/08 12:31:28 duration :42 Pam Martin

The Douglas Judge who barred a woman from court because of her religious head scarf is *not* commenting about the decision. Miedah, whose legal name is Lisa Valentine, says a bailiff barred her from a hearing at municipal court earlier this week. She was wearing this same scarf... a tradition of the Muslim faith. The judge then found her in contempt and sentenced her to 10 days in jail. Valentine: "I said... it's ridiculous and it's B.S. and I did use the full term of the word because I was violated. I'm a Muslim, but I'm a human too, and we deserve rights just like everybody else." Douglasville authorities released Valentine after a few hours. Several organizations, including the Anti Defamation League, have denounced the judge's contempt citation.

Date: 12/19/08 18:40:21 duration :15 Monica Pearson

Support today for a woman thrown in jail for refusing to remove her Muslim head scarf in court. About 50 people joined her outside the courthouse in Douglasville. They're angry at the judge, who sent her to jail.

Date: 12/19/08 23:17:42 duration :32 Monica Pearson

Tonight, the NAACP is calling on a local judge to step down, over a headscarf controversy. Daryl Bernard Graham: "Shame on you, Judge Rollins. Shame on you." About 50 people showed up today to support Miedah, whose legal name is Lisa Valentine. She is a Muslim. Earlier this week, Judge Rollins had Valentine arrested at the Municipal Court building in Douglasville. He charged her with contempt of court for refusing to remove her headscarf. She wears it for religious reasons. No comment from the judge. The police chief says city officials will talk about the case Monday.

Date: 12/21/08 17:43:37 duration :25

Amanda Rosseter

Tomorrow, Douglasville city officials are expected to talk about a headscarf controversy. Last week, Judge Rollins had a woman, whose legal name is Lisa Valentine, arrested at the Municipal Court Building – after she refused to remove the headscarf she wears for religious reasons. Valentine is a Muslim and goes by the name “Miedah.” The judge had her charged with contempt of court. The NAACP is calling on the judge to step down.

Date: 12/22/08 18:45:00 duration :36

Justin Farmer

We have new developments in the case of a Douglas County judge under fire for making a Muslim woman remove her headscarf. At a news conference today in Douglasville, Police Chief Joe Whisenant said the Judge, Keith Rollins, charged Lisa Valentine with contempt not for the headscarf, but for disruption in the courthouse. Chief Jose Whisennant: “Mrs. valentine began backing away from the metal detector and pointing her finger at the officer repeating her claims that the ruling was b-s and that the judge was a racist...she became loud enough that she attracted the attention of another officer.”) The city now plans to put up a sign that says no head gear in the courtroom.

Clayton County Sheriff's Office Transition

Date: 11/19/08 18:05:23 duration 1:29

Mark Winne

Clayton County Sheriff-Elect: “The office of the sheriff is on the rise. We can show the state that the office of sheriff is a noble one.” Fayette County Sheriff-Elect: “Is there a sense in this class is that part of the job is to restore the luster to the star? It is and whether you’re coming from a sheriff’s office that has a good reputation you want to polish that star.” Polk County Sheriff-Elect: “Number one thing on the mind of this class? Bring the respect back to the sheriff’s office and budget.” One sheriff elect said he and his 43 colleagues in the sheriffs-elect academy are concerned about budget cuts. Paulding S-E: “Probably the main concern that’s gonna affect us is the budget cuts from the state. Its gonna greatly affect the jail. we have an overcrowded jail now.” Newton S-E: “We’re gonna have to tighten our belts in order to fulfill some of the ideas and particularly the platforms that we have laid before the voters.” Henry S-E: “Our employees can tell us ways we can save money. They see waste probably better than anybody else.” But also about cutting the controversy, and not just in Clayton County. The class president, we’re told, is the sheriff-elect there. Clayton S-E: “We’ve all talked about how we can do our part to emphasize the professionalism.” And not just Fulton County. “When you rebuild, you have to restore the image and the dignity to the employees. And I’d say over half the class is facing that.” The training director says a big emphasis so far has been hearing from incumbent sheriffs about transition – relying on each other; and professionalism, but later the four-week course will cover courthouse security, serving civil papers, ethics, jail management and more.