

TELEVISION STATION WSB-TV / ATLANTA
QUARTERLY LISTING OF LOCAL PROGRAMS REFLECTING CONCERNS AND/OR NEEDS
OF THE COMMUNITY
OCTOBER 1, 2007 – DECEMBER 31, 2007

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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; 12:35-1:05am (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, 2007)

QUARTERLY ISSUES / PROGRAMS LIST

- EDUCATION / YOUTH
- DIVERSITY / IMMIGRATION
 - ECONOMY
- ENVIRONMENT / CONSERVATION
- TRAFFIC / TRANSPORTATION
- LAW ENFORCEMENT & CRIMINAL JUSTICE
 - POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
- COMMUNITY/NEIGHBORHOODS
 - ANIMAL WELFARE

Gwinnett Residents Upset Over Proposed School Re-Districting LinesDate: **10/21/07 11pm**

duration :35

John Pruitt

A battle is brewing in Gwinnett County as a subdivision prepares to fight the school board over new redistricting lines. The new lines would ultimately split the Hamilton Mill neighborhood in half – forcing children into two separate elementary schools. Homeowners fear the new lines could not only affect property values, but the sense of community. They plan to take their findings to the school board at a November 15th public hearing.

Barrow County Considers Elective Bible Classes in Public SchoolsDate: **11/05/07 12pm**

duration :18

Pam Martin

Bible classes could be coming to Barrow County schools. Tomorrow night the school board plans to vote on the issue. They'll either decide to offer the courses starting Fall 2008, wait until 2009, or not offer them at all. Last year state lawmakers approved a bill allowing schools to offer Bible classes as an elective.

Georgia's Private School Voucher Program CriticizedDate: **11/12/07 7am**

duration :19

Pam Martin

We have new information this morning about the controversy surrounding a school voucher program. About 900 disabled students used a new voucher program to attend private schools. The program offers disabled children vouchers worth anywhere from \$2,000 to \$15,0000 dollars annually. Critics argue the plan paves the way to eventually offer private school vouchers to all Georgia students.

North Fulton School Redistricting PlansDate: **10/22/07 6pm**

duration :19

John Pruitt

In North Fulton County, parents will have a chance tomorrow night to weigh in on school redistricting. It's for two new elementary schools in Sandy Springs. One school's under construction on Lake Forrest Drive. The other school on Ison Road is in the design phase. Tomorrow night's meeting is from 7:00-9:00pm at North Springs High School.

Parents, Teachers Want Answers About Independent DeKalb School Tuition MoneyDate: **11/30/07 6pm**

duration :20

Monica Pearson

Teachers and parents at an independent DeKalb County school say they want answers on where their tuition money is going. Teachers say they're not getting paid and parents say their child's education is suffering. (Tara Jones package)

Cobb High School Lines to be Re-Drawn

Date: **12/21/07 5pm** duration :21 Jovita Moore

Some Cobb County parents are upset that their children will not go to the same high school as their friends. Students at McCleskey Middle School are split – most will go to Kell High School – but a smaller percentage will attend Sprayberry High School. School officials say the split is needed because Kell is over capacity, and Sprayberry has room for several hundred more students.

South Atlanta High Students Speak Out on Effect of School Closing

Date: **12/11/07 6pm** duration :42 Monica Pearson

The city of Atlanta plans to relocate some South Atlanta High School students as part of a community redevelopment plan. And this afternoon, some students told the city council they do not like it. Student 1: "Some of my family members that live in apartments that are being redeveloped are being forced to move out of their apartments not having any place to stay and not receiving vouchers." Student 2: "This makes me feel as if I don't matter to the government because they don't take the people who are being affected seriously." Some students say their families cannot afford to live in the neighborhoods where they're being forced to move, and they won't have ready access to public transportation. The city council says it will consider the students' comments.

Date: **12/12/07 12pm** duration :37 Pam Martin

Atlanta city council members are now considering concerns raised by some South Atlanta high school students. The city is planning to relocate them as part of a community redevelopment plan. Student: "Some of my family members that live in apartments that are being redeveloped are being forced to move out of their apartments not having any place to stay and not receiving vouchers." Some students say their families cannot afford to live in the neighborhoods where they're being forced to move ... and they won't have ready access to public transportation.

DeKalb Parents Call School Closing Plans Into Question

Date: **12/18/07 6am** duration :41 Pam Martin

Some DeKalb County parents are questioning data used in a school controversy. The Nancy Creek Theme school is one of seven scheduled to close or relocate next year ... based on a demographer's report. Parents have spotted red flags in that report. In one case, the demographer estimated more than 200 homes being built in the Chamblee area ... parents say actual plans include more than 2,000. Parent: "It's not based on factual data, we have been able to prove that and we are basing all of the future development and spending for DeKalb schools on this same report." The parents say they found the exact wording of DeKalb's report with the same demographer's work in Virginia and Indiana. DeKalb County schools paid \$120,000 dollars for the report.

Clayton County Schools Could Lose Accreditation Status

Date: 12/14/07 5pm

duration 1:15

Tom Jones

Anthony Williams, parent: "I look at my community and I see houses that's for sale that's been on the market for at least 5 years that haven't moved." Williams is sure the chaos on the school board has adversely affected the housing market in Clayton County. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which governs school districts, will soon decide whether to investigate allegations of abuse and power, micromanaging and conflict of interest by the board. SACS placed the school district on probation in 2003 over micromanaging concerns. If the association yanks the district's accreditation, students wouldn't be eligible for Hope Scholarships. Williams: "With us being placed possibly losing our accreditation. I don't want to have to my child to Rockdale County." The Board's president sent us a statement saying the board has worked hard to increase its effectiveness. Members of the metro south Association of Realtors think the board controversy has contributed to property values decreasing by 20 percent. David Brown: "It's gotta be the school board. That's the only relationship that we can find and the property values are proving it." It's so bad the realtors have discussed going to the governor to try to impeach the board. Barton: "That has only been presented to me as what are our options and what can we do."

Civil Rights Groups Protest Halloween "Noose"Date: **10/16/07 6pm**

duration :32

Jovita Moore

A so-called Halloween display in Troup County is stirring up plenty of controversy. The McCanns, who live on Hoganville Road, had three Halloween dummies with nooses around their necks hanging on gallows. After a protest by several civil rights groups, someone removed them early Saturday. Deborah McCann told Channel 2 Action News she and her husband are still deciding whether to re-hang them. Outraged community leaders say they hope the message got through. Bruce Griggs: "The hanging of the nooses ... it shows ...and to culture." The McCanns have said the family intended no racial overtones with the display.

Date: **10/25/07 5pm**

duration :23

Monica Pearson

The Troup County NAACP says it's not satisfied with the city's response about two recent noose hangings in LaGrange. The NAACP wants an ordinance to prohibit such public displays. But the mayor of LaGrange says the city has to be careful not to hamper freedom of speech. He suggested the city could adopt a policy statement against the displays, but it would not give the city any enforcement power.

Student Remarks on Homosexuals in School Publication Spark AngerDate: **11/02/07 7am**

duration :23

Pam Martin

A high school magazine editor now is publishing a rebuttal of a controversial editorial. Kell High School's magazine angered many students and parents when it published an opinion piece calling homosexuals "diseased" and a "mistake of evolution." This week, the school published an opinion piece refuting the first editorial. And the magazine's editor says that had every right to publish the editorials, because the goal was to make students think.

Date: **11/02/07 5pm**

duration :24

Monica Pearson

In Cobb County, a high school magazine editor now is publishing a rebuttal of a controversial editorial. Kell High School's magazine angered many students and parents when it published an opinion piece calling homosexuals "diseased" and a "mistake of evolution." This week, the school published an opinion piece refuting the first editorial. And the magazine's editor says they had every right to publish the editorials, because the goal was to make students think.

Carroll County Commissioner Uses Ethnic Slur, Declines to ApologizeDate: **12/06/07 11pm**

duration :31

John Pruitt

Comments from a Carroll County commissioner have drawn anger and outrage. William Head has served for seven years. But it's his comments at Tuesday's commission meeting on jail overcrowding where he used a derogatory term to describe Hispanics, that have attracted controversy. Head: "It's going to get worse as the criminals move in from Atlanta and based on what I see, and wetbacks from down south we're going to have more and more all the time." Commissioner Head told Channel 2 Action News today that he stands by what he said and will not apologize.

Date: **12/19/07 5pm**

duration :28

John Pruitt

Carroll County commissioner Bill Head is maintaining his stance that we will *not* apologize for his use of an ethnic slur against Hispanics. Recently, Head said the slur during a board meeting. At last night's meeting he reiterated that he would not apologize for using the term 'wetbacks.' He says it was an appropriate description of illegal immigrants. Representatives from the NAACP and two Hispanic organizations are calling for his resignation. They wanted him to apologize at another meeting last night. He did not.

Drought Impact on Georgia's EconomyDate: **10/30/07 5pm**duration **1:45****Lori Geary**

In this unprecedented drought, economic forecasters say metro Atlanta's economy is not about to turn from green to brown anytime soon. Rajeev: "So far, what somebody loses, somebody else gains. People who are not having good sales near the Marinas – their loss of sales is being made up by people trying to drill wells." The head of Georgia State's economic forecasting center says there are some industries taking an obvious hit from the drought. It has cost nurseries and landscape companies almost 14,000 full and part-time jobs. Georgia's agriculture industry has taken an almost \$800 million dollar hit but we're not feeling the pinch here in metro Atlanta. Rajeev: "It will be a big hit for the farmer that suffers, but in the bigger picture about the income generation in the metro Atlanta area, which runs about \$150 billion dollars or the state of Georgia that runs about \$250 billion dollars ... it's still a very small number. Sam Williams: "The good thing about metro Atlanta's economy and the north Georgia economy is that we're very diversified." The metro Atlanta Chamber president says because we're a service economy, the drought is not really affecting most big employers or small business owners. Williams: "Right now, you couldn't attribute other than landscaping and boating businesses that any company is losing jobs of any significant impact on this huge regional economy." Just yesterday Paulding County called for an immediate moratorium on zoning requests for commercial and residential construction. Dr. Rajeev Dhawan says if these types of restrictions start to spread metro-wide, that's when the economic impact begins. Dhawan: "If it gets even worse that there are outright restrictions on growth ... that would be a very big hit to the local economy."

Governor Speaks on Economic OutlookDate: **12/04/07 6pm**duration **:28****Monica Pearson**

Governor Sonny Perdue is painting a pretty picture of Georgia's economy. He spoke today at an economic outlook luncheon. Perdue: "We've worked hard to fill up our rainy day reserves and I'm delighted to tell you today that they are at the end of the last fiscal year. \$1.5 billion dollars strong." Governor Perdue also says unemployment in Georgia is low, and job growth is higher than the national levels. But he admits some businesses are having financial trouble because of the drought.

Kia Plant to Bring Jobs to AreaDate: **12/20/07 6am**duration **:21****Pam Martin**

There is good news for Georgia's economy. Governor Sonny Perdue announced this week a major Kia supplier will build its first US plant in LaGrange. Sewan Precision, which is based in Korea, will produce various parts for Kia Motors manufacturing Georgia. Construction begins in spring 2008 and production is scheduled to start in Fall 2009. The company plans to create 700 jobs.

Gas Prices and the Local EconomyDate: **12/23/07 5pm**duration **:17****Amanda Rosseter**

Gas prices are holding steady here in Georgia. AAA reports the slowing economy and may mean gas prices remain virtually unchanged this week. Right now regular unleaded gas in Georgia will run you an average \$2.89 cents a gallon. That's up .66 cents compared to this time last year.

Drought Affects Georgia Industry

Date: **10/23/07 12pm**

duration :38

Pam Martin

The ongoing water crisis is having an affect on many of Georgia's businesses ... beyond agriculture. The carpet industry in Dalton uses about half of the city's water supply. But with dangerously low levels on the Sonasauga River in Whitfield County, Dalton utilities says it may have to cut the amount of water supplied to the carpet industry. That could hurt the local economy. Spokesman: "There could be some layoffs but were hoping that won't happen because, again, the mills are working very hard to conserve as much water as they can so they can stay at full production and full employment." Officials say the Conasauga River has about 55-60 days of water left.

Mortgage Crisis Leads to Job Loss

Date: **11/02/07 6am**

duration :32

Fred Blankenship

Georgia's economy is feeling the pinch from the US housing slump. The state ranked 8th nationwide in the number of homes in foreclosure. That's adding up to some tough times for business owners like Candace Ledbetter. She says business started slowing down in May. By mid-summer it came to a halt, forcing her to lay off employees. Ledbetter: "Oh, I hate doing that. But it's like you gotta see what you need to do to survive, to get through this." The state labor commissioner says companies have laid off nearly 3,000 Georgians because of the mortgage and housing slump.

Planned Civil Rights Center in Atlanta Should Boost Economy

Date: **12/11/07 6pm**

duration :23

John Pruitt

A new report is highlighting the benefits of a proposed civil and human rights center here in Atlanta. A consulting company says the center would draw about 650,000 visitors a year; create 1,150 new jobs; and add more than \$1 billion dollars to Georgia's economy over the next ten years. A location for the center has not yet been decided, but it's hoped the facility can open by 2010.

City Councilwoman Proposes Plan to Help Mortgage Holders

Date: **11/07/07 12pm**

duration 1:15

Jim Strickland

Too much traffic and congestion have always been Atlanta's Achilles heel. Add to that a massive mortgage fraud scheme – and city leaders are trying to drive the city in a new direction. Mary Norwood, Atlanta City Council: "" Not people getting in houses they couldn't afford, but truly crooks from out of state misusing and abusing our land and our neighborhoods." So, a new plan is on the table at the Atlanta Housing Forum that would take up to 5,000 foreclosed homes – caught in the mortgage fraud crisis – rehab them and sell them at affordable prices. There are already 2,200 homes on the market inside the city limits, under \$160,000. The plan would put families back in homes that are boarded up and invite crime, cut congestion on the roads, and avoid teardowns in the older neighborhoods. Atlanta's plan is modeled after programs in Dallas and L.A., which helped those cities with crime, congestion, and community

Alpharetta City Hall Ticketed For Watering Ban Violation

Date: **10/25/07 5pm** duration :15 Tom Jones

Officials say someone did attempt to shut the sprinklers off, but the valve they turned off wasn't connected to the 3 sprinklers that were left on. They say they are taking conservation very seriously. That officer noticed the sprinklers watering the shrubbery here three times and that's when he wrote city hall a warning and two citations. But the city won't have to pay the \$500 dollar fine.

Date: **10/25/07 11pm** duration :19 Monica Pearson

[Private individuals] are not the only ones getting tickets for violating the water ban. Police issued three citations to Alpharetta's City Hall for running its sprinklers. City officials say it was an oversight. City Hall since has shut off the sprinklers. The city will not have to pay the fines because the money just goes back to the city administrator.

Alabama Sues Corps of Engineers for Cherokee County Reservoir

Date: **10/28/07 6pm** duration :38 Jaquitta Williams

More controversy in the war over water ... the state of Alabama has filed a lawsuit against the US Army Corp of Engineers. In the suit, Alabama officials argue the construction of the Hickory Log Creek reservoir in Cherokee County will *only* benefit metro Atlanta. Alabama wants the corps to revoke permits it granted for the reservoir. Local officials say the project is nearly completed. "It's like being pregnant and getting ready to deliver a baby ... The baby's coming ... And for Alabama to say you can't deliver the baby is ridiculous." Max Bacon says close to \$100 million dollars have been invested in the reservoir. The project should be complete by 2008.

Outdoor Watering Ban: Zero Tolerance in Douglas County

Date: **10/17/07 6pm** duration :34 Jovita Moore

The water crisis is leading to new changes in Douglas County. The county water and sewer authority now has a zero tolerance policy. Anyone caught watering will have their water cut off immediately. In Fayette County, the outdoor watering ban is being called a success. Officials say they have a 200-day supply of water – even though the lakes are drying up. Water usage is down 27% since the ban. Water is a big concern on the campus of UGA Athens. Students and administrators met today to review current policies. They'll have a public meeting to talk about a water plan next Tuesday.

Protest Against Water Release At Buford Dam

Date: **10/26/07 6pm** duration :20 John Pruitt

Protestors may try to block water releases at Buford Dam tomorrow. Flowery Branch's Patrick Callahan is asking boaters and kayakers to stay in the lower pool near the dam tomorrow. He says they'll ignore the sirens, which signal water releases. The Corps of Engineers is not commenting specifically on the protest, but says their biggest concern will be safety.

Region May Have to Access Lake Lanier “Dead Pool”

Date: **10/29/07 11pm** duration John Pruitt

The severe drought soon may push Georgia into Lake Lanier reserves the state has never tapped into. It's the dead pool – which is about 115 feet of water below the conservation pool ... that we're using right now. The governor has expressed concern about the quality of the water there. But we've learned independent tests from different areas and depths this weekend showed reasonable good quality. The Corps of Engineers now says that Lake Lanier has an estimated 280 days of usable water left.

Metro Residents Begin to Hoard Bottled Water

Date: **11/02/07 6pm** duration :14 Monica Pearson

The growing concern about Georgia's drought has some metro residents planning for the worst. They're buying water – gallons of it – and storing it, just in case! One Sandy Springs man says he is not panicking, just preparing (Jovita Moore package)

Florida EPA Evaluates Impact of Reduced Flow from Georgia

Date: **11/30/07 6pm** duration :22 Monica Pearson

The Florida Secretary of Environmental Protection is meeting with the public in Apalachicola today to see how people there feel about the reduced flow of water into the state. Fishermen are complaining about the water levels saying they aren't making as much money since Georgia cut it's releases. Franklin County, Florida has declared a state of emergency, and is asking the governor's office to get involved.

Costly Well Re-Opening Considered for Lawrenceville

Date: **12/12/07 12pm** duration :23 Pam Martin

Tomorrow people in Lawrenceville will have a chance to speak about a way to build the water supply, but there's some controversy. City officials are considering re-opening a uranium-contaminated well on Ezzard Street. It might cost as much as \$4 million dollars to reopen that well and several others. But the city's wells can produce 1.7 million gallons a day.

More Red Light Cameras Coming to Metro Atlanta

Date: 12/04/07 6pm

duration :15

Jovita Moore

Whether you like them or not, more red light cameras are showing up at intersections across Georgia. After trying them out, Marietta wants to double the number of intersections covered by the cameras.

Air Traffic Controllers Raise Safety Concerns

Date: 01/10/08 5pm

duration 1:16

Manuel Bojorquez

Even as planes departed from the world's busiest airport, the president of the union representing air traffic controllers talked about issues he contends make the skies unsafe. Controller: "I believe the conditions with the staffing shortages that we have in place with the loss of veteran controllers that have the experience to work this kind of traffic ... yes, I believe it's unsafe at these airports." Those comments during a conference call with reporters – in regards to air traffic controllers in the Atlanta region, as well as New York, Chicago, and southern California – the nation's busiest centers. FAA spokesperson: "The system is not unsafe ... the FAA operates the safest air travel system in the world." With that, FAA spokeswoman Kathleen Bergen says the data used by the National Air Traffic Controllers Association to call a staffing emergency is blown out of proportion. Bergen: "There is no staffing crisis. The FAA is in the fourth year of a very aggressive program to hire up to 12,000 new controllers. We're hiring about 1,200 new controllers nationwide each year." Still, when it comes to Atlanta, union president Patric Forrey is not backing off his claims. Forrey: "It's the busiest airport in the world, for Christ's sake. You can't afford to have any kind of an error like that in an airport like Atlanta."

Traffic Study Findings Reveal Atlanta as Among the WorstDate: **10/25/07 6pm**

duration 1:25

Joyce Oscar

Motorist 1: "The traffic, believe it or not, is better in Los Angeles than it is here." Motorist 2: "It's a mess. It keeps getting more and more congested." It's not something we don't already know, yet it's a growing problem that is not going away. The state is facing a \$51 billion dollar shortfall to fund its highway transportation system. The Georgia Department of Transportation is releasing the findings of "TRIP," a Washington DC-based nonprofit organization. The study finds that one in five bridges in the state are deficient and while our highways and roadways are in good shape now, 40% will need repairs and improvements over the next two decades. Mike Evans: "Our reputation of having congestion like it is here in the metro Atlanta area [precludes] any consideration from a lot of big companies that might otherwise come here." The study finding the top three most congested sections of highway in metro Atlanta to be I-75/85 from I-20 to I-85 North, and from I-85 South to I-20. Coming in third is I-285 North from Georgia 400 to I-85 North. Motorist: "It's a lack of planning from a long, long time ago." So commuter Allen Dinerman says he finally got wise and made his own plan to deal with the gridlock. Dinerman: "I live right over there and my office is right over there, so that's what I did for planning. I'm a mile and half from my house."

Holiday Traffic

Date: 11/20/07 11pm

duration 1:15

Richard Elliot

Day Harris hates traffic, which means she's probably going to hate the next few days, because in metro Atlanta, we don't just get turkeys for Thanksgiving. WE get jams – lots and lots of traffic jams. Matthew Queen: "It was pretty awful." Tens of thousands of people are expected to jam the highways and byways of metro Atlanta during the Thanksgiving holiday – the single busiest transportation holiday of the year. It doesn't officially start until Wednesday, but some motorists believe a lot of folks are getting a head start. The DOT is handing out a thanksgiving present of sorts – they've suspended all road construction for the duration of the holiday. That's great news to Day Harris, who incidentally had to fill up her car after spending two hours in traffic. She's being careful where she drives for the holiday.

Atlanta's Traffic Deters National Companies From Re-Locating Here

Date: 12/18/07 6pm

duration :20

Rachel Kim

A consulting firm says Atlanta's traffic is bad for business! The firm's leader tells the metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce that there used to be few complaints when he recommended Atlanta as a place to relocate or expand. Now he believes companies are ruling out our city because of the traffic. Atlanta's traffic is rated the second worst in the nation.

Atlanta Traffic Reaches Crisis Level, Some Say

Date: 10/28/07 9am

duration :35

Carol Sbarge

Some say traffic is as big a crisis in Atlanta as the drought. Georgians for Better Transportation contends the state is looking at a \$51 billion dollar funding short-fall through the year 2035. Without new funding, the group says congestion will get much worse and ultimately hinder economic growth. Mike Kenn, Georgians For Better Transportation: "The problem is so big it will require a sales tax increase ... that's not palatable." They say if something isn't done, Georgia drivers would also find deteriorated highways and bridges.

East Point Residents May Face Costly Meter UpgradesDate: **10/16/07 5pm**

duration :37

John Pruitt

The city of East Point has delayed a controversial water fix that would cost taxpayers! Homeowners received notices this month saying the city would require them to pay for meter changes or risk losing service. The cost of the changes runs as high as \$1,500 dollars for some houses. But last night, the city council put the change on hold. "If we can buy some more time for our citizens to get this done, we can look for alternative funding mechanisms for people who may have a hardship paying for this." State law requires the city to update the water meters, but East Point has pushed back any repairs for 160 days.

Date: **10/16/07 6am**

duration :35

Pam Martin

In South Fulton County, East Point residents have won a delay in what they considered to be an unreasonable demand. Residents are upset about this public notice they received earlier this month. It says they have to do a costly retro-fit to their water lines in the next couple months – or face the possibility of having their water shutoff. Trina Davis, resident: "I'd like you to rethink this. This is too short of notice." Last night the city council voted to suspend the retro-fit requirement for 160 days.

Some Want Nichols Judge To Step AsideDate: **11/07/07 6pm**

duration :33

Monica Pearson

The judge at the center of the Brian Nichols case controversy now says he will *not* respond to a prosecutor's lawsuit against him. A Fulton county prosecutor wants the Georgia Supreme Court to remove Judge Hilton Fuller from the case – or force him to resume jury selection. Brian Nichols is charged with murdering four people during and after an escape from the Fulton County courthouse in 2005. But numerous delays have plagued the case. Judge Fuller says he wants to remain impartial. So he will not file a response to the lawsuit unless the court orders him to do so.

Date: **12/31/07 11pm**

duration :22

Fred Blankenship

The judge in the Brian Nichols trial has refused to step down from the case. Judge Hilton Fuller rejected a prosecution motion that he should be disqualified. District Attorney Paul Howard filed the motion. He's blamed Judge Fuller for some of the numerous delays in the case. Nichols is accused of killing 4 people that began with his escape from the Fulton County courthouse in March, 2005.

Nativity Display in Paulding County Sparks "Church/State" ControversyDate: **12/17/07 12pm**

duration :20

Fred Blankenship

Support is growing for a Christmas display in Paulding County. We just checked and an online petition to save the nativity scene has more than 5,100 signatures. A group in Washington DC is threatening to sue the city of Dallas over the display. The group claims it's a violation of the constitution. The Dallas mayor and others want it to stay put.

Date: **12/18/07 18:37:17**

duration :24

Jovita Moore

If the fight over a nativity scene in Paulding County goes to court, the city of Dallas will have help in its corner. People we talked with enjoy the neon display along Main Street – but a Washington-based group sent a letter demanding the city take it down. The “Americans United for Separation of Church and State” threatened the legal action. The Alliance Defense Fund has volunteered to help defend the city.

Spending Issues Within DeKalb Police Department

Date: **12/20/07 6am**

duration :43

Pam Martin

A hidden clause in a two-year old police motorcycle contract could cost taxpayers thousands of dollars. DeKalb’s police department expected to sell 12 bikes back to a dealer for \$138,000 dollars. The department says it always includes a two-year buy-back option, but this time the dealer won’t take back the bikes. A clause in the contract says the dealer will only take back 14 bikes, and 23 of them were involved in a crash. "We spend over 4 million dollars on a legal department not to mention the millions we spend on outside legal counsel, you would think we would have caught this mistake before it even happened." The DeKalb police department hopes to sell the bikes at auction, or to another dealer, but probably won’t get the full price.

Date: **12/20/07 11pm**

duration :41

John Pruitt

DeKalb County Police Chief Terrell Bolton has serious questions tonight about purchases made for his department. Chief Bolton tells Channel 2 he never knew the work was approved in increments just below the amount required for competitive bidding. The purchases were for consultant services. Bolton says county executive assistant Richard Stogner told him a contractor was not being paid. Bolton: “It was completely his direction. He never showed me any paperwork. Actually, I have all the invoices that relate to that particular letter or interest, and my name is not on any of those invoices.” Stogner wrote a letter today defending the deals. He says the county commission authorized payments of up to \$988,000 dollars to the contractor. CEO Vernon Jones wants an independent investigation.

Kennesaw Must Re-Do Mayoral Election

Date: **12/14/07 12pm**

duration :34

Pam Martin

It’s a do-over for a Cobb County town that thought it already elected a mayor. Voters in Kennesaw gave businessman Mark Mathews a 144 vote win over incumbent mayor Leonard Church in November. But election officials later learned they left out more than 200 potential voters in a newly built complex. Now a judge has ordered a new election. Both candidates say the biggest challenge will be getting voters to show up at the polls for the new election January 8th.

WSB-TV Local News of Public Interest: Community/Neighborhoods

“Big Building” Ban in Duluth

Date: **12/18/07 6pm** duration :20 John Pruitt

In Gwinnett County, a temporary ban in big buildings in Duluth is over, but a fight over a new Wal-Mart is not. City leaders passed a new ordinance for large scale buildings last night. The change paves the way for a new Wal-Mart slated for Peachtree Industrial Boulevard to move ahead. A group against the store is vowing to keep fighting.

DeKalb Residents Oppose Mixed-Use Development Plans

Date: **12/05/07 7am** duration :23 Carol Sbarge

A controversial development project keeps drawing big crowds! Concerned residents met at Kittredge Magnet School last night. The Sembler Company is proposing a huge mixed-use development for the intersection of North Druid Hills and Briarcliff Road. Two commissioners want to create a special tax district which could bring in more than \$50 million dollars to improve infrastructure. But some people oppose the project because at least two schools would have to relocate.

John’s Creek Battles Billboard Company

Date: **11/05/07 07:20:12** duration :23 Pam Martin

Today, we’ll be watching a billboard controversy that’s made its way to the Georgia Supreme Court. Granite State Outdoor Advertising is challenging Roswell’s sign regulations. The dispute dates back to 2003 when the city denied several of the company’s applications to install signs. Granite State later sued and a judge ruled in favor of the city. Company executives are now arguing the trial court committed errors when that decision was made.

Date: **12/06/07 7am** duration :36 Carol Sbarge

A battle over billboards is now heading back to court. City leaders in John’s Creek want a judge to toss out a deal between Fulton County and a billboard company that sued. The deal would bring dozens of billboards to North Fulton County. “I think we fought so hard just a year ago to become a city the citizens of Johns Creek had a pretty simple expectation and that was to some degree they could control their own destiny.” Right now, John’s Creek has only one billboard. The mayor says John’s Creek is not anti-billboard, but he wants companies to play by the city’s rules, *not* Fulton County’s.

Residents Want DeKalb Bar Closing Time Moved Up

Date: **10/26/07 6pm** duration :24 John Pruitt

Tonight, a DeKalb County commissioner says he has a new proposal in the battle over bar closing hours. DeKalb County CEO Vernon Jones says he wants to keep the current 4am closing time. But Commissioner Jeff Radar says residents living within 500 feet of a bar should vote on allowing a bar to stay open that late. Radar wants bars to close at 2am, unless nearby residents approve a later closing.

Date: **10/28/07 8am**

duration :23

Carol Sbarge

A DeKalb County commissioner says he has a new proposal in the battle over bar closing hours. DeKalb County CEO Vernon Jones says he wants to keep the current 4am closing time. But Commissioner Jeff Radar says residents living within 500 feet of a bar should vote on allowing the bar to stay open that late. Radar wants bars to close at 2am, unless nearby residents approve a later closing.

Date: **11/09/07 6pm**

duration :29

John Pruitt

There's another shot in the battle over bar closing hours in DeKalb County. Next week the commission will vote whether to force bars and restaurants to stop serving alcohol at 2am instead of the current 4am. Today the county's CEO is pulling out his red pen ready to veto the ordinance.

Date: **12/31/07 11pm**

duration :22

Fred Blankenship

On a night when most people stock up on beer and liquor to bring in the new year, one liquor store has gone bone dry. DeKalb County officials shut down the Rockbridge Package store claiming the owner violated zoning rules, even though he was in business for the past four years.

WSB-TV Local News of Public Interest: Public Safety / Law Enforcement

Walton County Sheriff Defends Taser Use

Date: **12/11/07 11pm** duration :24 John Pruitt

Tonight, the Walton County sheriff is defending the use of a taser on a suspect who died. Deputies went to a home in Monroe to talk to Leroy Patterson, Jr about a woman's sexual assault allegations. They say Patterson got angry and got into a scuffle. A deputy tasered him and he died. The GBI hopes toxicology tests will help determine what, if any, role the taser played in Patterson's death.

Cobb Police Defend Interstate Shut-Down

Date: **11/09/07 12pm** duration :30 Fred Blankenship

Cobb County police are defending that bank robber search which shut down I-75 during rush hour! Officers stopped all lanes on southbound 75 near Moore's Mill late yesterday afternoon. They went car to car to search for the robber and the missing money! The shutdown angered some drivers and frightened others. Driver: "Well as a female in Atlanta, I think that was very unsafe. I was very frightened." Police did not find the robber, even though they were following a signal sent by a GPS device hidden in the money.

Griffin Police Chief Denies Ticket Quotas

Date: **11/15/07 12pm** duration :32 Pam Martin

Griffin's Police Chief is denying he's issued traffic ticket "quotas." Earlier this week, we reported on a controversial memo. It calls for Griffin police officers to write 20 citations a day to meet performance objectives. Yesterday, the city's police chief spoke out on radio station WKEU to try to clear things up. Chief: "I think if you look, it says performance objective. a citation can be a warning or it can be a ticket." Critics call it a quota system. The city manager says they're simply asking officers to have objectives for the time they spend in the field.

Legislator Wants to Loosen Gun Laws

Date: **12/28/07 12pm** duration :27 Amanda Rosseter

Locked and loaded on campus? A Georgia lawmaker wants guns allowed in more public places. State Representative Tim Bearden says he almost always carries a gun tucked in his waistband. He filed a bill to change Georgia law to allow guns in places like parks, political rallies, and college campuses. "They should be allowed to be able to defend themselves and even others in case of an emergency." Law enforcement officials we talked to say the change would concern them.

Muslims of America Camps Under Scrutiny

Date: 11/01/07 6pm

duration 5:05

Mark Winne

Steve Emerson: "As one FBI official pointed out to me, they are considered ticking time bombs." The story involves two compounds plunked down in piney patches of rural Georgia – outposts of the Muslims of the Americas, or MOA. And two sides –to whether the MOA and its founder, Pakistani Cleric Sheikh Mabarik Ali Gilani, are tied to terrorism. Gilani suggests no. "I warn the Muslims in America. Live peaceful! And don't be incited!" But critics, and a report from a federally funded group, give a different view. Paul Williams: "I'm saying the MOA is a front for terrorism!" It is an issue that may be of special concern to residents of Franklin County in northeast Georgia, where we found the MOA's Madinah Village; and in Wayne County – in south Georgia – where records tie another village to Muslims of the America's. Martin Mawyer: "Anyone that has a camp in the neighborhood – including the ones in Georgia – should be concerned." Though he denies it, at least two reports place Sheik Gilani as founder also of "Jamaat UI Fuqra." One report we obtained through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service not only calls Fuqra "a terrorist group" but details investigations as far back as 1983 and says 'it is suspected that Fuqra members and associates have been involved at least 13 murders and 16 fire bombings.' It also refers to 'covert training compounds' and mentions at least 13 states, including Georgia. We tried over weeks to get someone from the MOA to go on camera with us, without success. We tried in south Georgia where somebody zipped out of the village seemingly intent on getting *us* on camera. We tried in north Georgia; we tried out of Georgia – near Chicago. Finally we got a phone message: "I'm calling in regards to your persistent requests for an interview. At this time, we're not giving any exclusive interviews." And days later a DVD arrived with an MOA return address. Sheikh: "Thousands and thousands and thousands of youngsters have been reformed. They live very peacefully in their 22 towns." On the DVD, Gilani directs American Muslims to never do anything wrong against their country. But critic Martin Mawyer, of the Christian Action Network, says he has some video with Sheikh Gilani on it too. Gilani: "Every Muslim, man and woman, should learn to defend himself" Mawyer: "It is a terrorist training video!" Checking that claim is complicated by the MOA's lack of cooperation – and the tape's possibly foreign locale. It was made, Mawyer concedes, about 1990. Is it fair to use it against his followers 17 years later? Mawyer: "Everything that is in this video can be used to this day. How to hijack cars, set off bombs, shoot people, strangle people, there's nothing in it that's outdated." John Gaissert is police chief in Commerce – just miles from Madinah Village. His bio includes a counter-terrorism exchange program in Israel. We showed him part of the video. The remarks of the Imam were of concern to me professionally. I would like to know more about the length and context. The Christian Action Network also provided a report from the "regional organized crime information center." That report also describes Jamaat UI-Fuqra as a terrorist group, and names two organizations as sources of significant funds for it – one is Muslims of the Americas. On the MOA website, Gilani says he and MOA members have adamantly denied knowledge of UI-Fuqra for years. Sherriff: "We've never had a large amount of complaints on it." We checked with the sheriffs in the two Georgia counties where we found MOA villages. Sheriff: "The FBI knows they're there and I'm sure they check on it." Franklin County Sherriff: "The feds, they do come in and out from time to time and they do checks, but at this time we've not had any problem." Concerning the Wayne County compound, a neighbor told us of hearing gunfire in rapid bursts from the area on several occasions, but there was positive too. In nearby Jesup, at Hewitt's Auto Repair, "they're like a contributor to the community. They spend money here." Librarian: "They bring their children in since they home-school." And the library manager says they're avid library users. "I like to think that this group is not a part of the radical Islamic jihad, whatever that is." Mawyer of the Christian Action Network says he believes that *is* what the MOA is. Winne: "How does your campaign against these compounds measure up to your Christian mandate to love thy neighbor?" Mawyer: "When I see the threat that these camps pose to my neighbor, I am loving my neighbor."

Study Committee Examines Eyewitness Testimony Practices

Date: **12/28/07 5pm**

duration **2:00**

Richard Elliot

They all acknowledge there is something wrong with the system ... because it allowed innocent men to get convicted on the basis of eyewitness testimony that was flat-out wrong. Stephanie Stuckey Benfield: "We've had six men who have been exonerated by DNA testing and every single one of them in Georgia was convicted on the basis of faulty eyewitness testimony." Men like Robert Clark, Clarence Harrison, and Pete Williams – men who spent more than a decade in jail for crimes they did not commit. DNA evidence set them free, but DNA samples are not always available at every crime scene. So investigators still must rely on eyewitness testimony. That's why this house study committee is working with state law enforcement, prosecutors, and defense attorneys to come up with a brand new way to do that. The Georgia Innocence Project, which helped secure the release of some of those men, says the #1 way is to make law enforcement agencies come up with written procedures – because right now, many don't. Lisa George: "We thought it might be up to half of the law enforcement agencies in Georgia that had no written policies on eyewitness evidence collection. We had no idea it would be 80%." Police and prosecutors agree there should be written procedures according to national standards, but the don't believe making another law is the answer, because – they say – it would take discretion away from courts and juries, and might lead to guilty criminals getting released on technicalities. Gwen Keyes Fleming: "If you do not stand up for the victims who have been victimized and give them justice, you're denying a population of this state as well. Victims have to have equal footing at the table."

Police Informant Files Suit Against APD

Date: **12/04/07 6pm**

duration **1:30**

Mark Winne

Alex White: "To be honest with you, man, I'm just hoping to get me enough where I can start a new life somewhere outside the city of Atlanta." Lawyer: "His life is a complete shambles. He has to start all over again." Alex White says for years he was a paid law enforcement informant ... but not after what happened on Neal Street, November of last year. And now he says he should be paid through a new federal lawsuit against the city of Atlanta and certain current and former Atlanta Police officers for what he went through. Lawyer: "We're looking for damages to get his life back on track, and we're also seeking punitive damages sufficient to prevent this terrible incident or a similar incident from ever happening again her in Atlanta." White says he refused to buckle to pressure to cover up the circumstances surrounding the death of elderly Kathryn Johnston during a botched Atlanta police drug raid. White: "It was the right time. I spoke out. God called on me, and I answered." The complaint suggests, in an effort to procure search warrants and meet quotas, officers made false statements about drug purchases that never took place. White's attorney suggested the city fostered a culture of corruption. Winne: "Should he have blown the whistle sooner?" Attorney: "There is no way anyone could have known sooner." White "I was just scared, man, and I still am to this day."

Fulton County Animal Control Resists Humane Society Take-OverDate: **12/14/07 12pm**

duration :37

Fred Blankenship

The Atlanta Humane Society is dropping efforts to take over animal control for Fulton County. The county needs a new vendor to run the operation. But Humane Society president Carl Leveridge says their attempts to get information about the \$2.4 million dollar contract went nowhere. They say the county was slow in providing information. Leveridge: "To try to do a professional job I started asking a lot of questions and I wanted to make sure I had the best information before I moved forward." The Humane Society now says it will not submit a bid. Fulton acknowledges some delays in providing information but denies it tried to block any vendor's efforts.

Date: **12/16/07 9am**

duration :29

Amanda Rosseter

The Atlanta Humane Society says it met resistance instead of a response in its effort to take over animal control from Fulton County. The contract for Fulton County Animal Control is nearing an end so the county needs to find a new vendor. The president of the Atlanta Humane Society says he hit roadblocks when he looked into the \$2.4 million dollar contract. Fulton County officials acknowledge a glitch, but insist they gave the Atlanta Humane Society a written response. The Humane Society decided to opt out.

Group Urges Georgia Aquarium Boycott

Date: 12/10/07 12pm

duration :24

Amanda Rosseter

A group that claims there's animal cruelty at the Georgia Aquarium is calling for a boycott. Tonight, "Georgia Animal Rights and Protection" plans to stage a protest outside the aquarium. The group is upset about the recent death of Marina, the Beluga whale. Protestors also want to bring attention to the deaths of another whale and two whale sharks at the attraction. Aquarium officials released a statement today saying Marina was deeply cared for.

Corrections Officer Shoots Neighbor's Dog

Date: 10/11/07 6am

duration :38

Fred Blankenship

A Henry county woman is heartbroken this morning, after a neighbor shot and killed her dog. Lynn Eubanks dog, "Joey" wandered into a neighbor's yard Monday night. When she went to look for Joey, she found him dead. Police arrested her neighbor's son, Daniel Spencer, on several charges for killing Joey, including animal cruelty. Spencer is a corrections officer at the Henry County jail. Eubanks says Joey should have been on a leash, but he didn't deserve what happened. Eubanks: "'Took a dear part of our family away, and he should be sorry." Spencer is out on bond this morning and still is a corrections officer. But an internal investigation is underway.

Atlanta Dog Fighting Ring Broken Up

Date: 12/22/07 5pm

duration 1:15

Manuel Bojorquez

Just as Atlanta police officers pulled even more evidence out of this home on Blanton Road in southwest Atlanta, the man they arrested – 31-year-old Ossiah Philips had his first appearance before a Fulton County judge. Philips now faces charges of aggravated animal cruelty and dog fighting. The judge denied bond. Officer: “We obtained a search warrant to go thoroughly through the property.” A tip led officers to this house last night, where they say they have found plenty of evidence of dog fighting. Within hours, they removed pitbulls from the residence and say they found the remains of other dogs. Today, in the light of day, they found even more evidence outside the home. Officer: “Behind the residence, approximately 250 yards or more ... you find a trail and there’s where the dogs were ... chains, heavy chains; small dog houses; a pit back in there ... it’s very deep in a wooded area behind the residence.” As the bust happened, neighbors watched. Neighbor: “I don’t know what’s been going on over here.” As with any suspected case of dog fighting, officers believe more people are connected to this home and the alleged operation. They are hoping the sole person in custody right now – Ossiah Philips – will provide information leading to more arrests.

Future of Grady Hospital

Date: 10/29/07 11pm duration :23 John Pruitt

This evening, Grady Memorial Hospital officials tell us, a date had been set for a vote that may decide the future of the facility. They say the board of directors will vote November 26 on whether to privatize Grady. A committee has recommended privatizing Grady as a way to keep the hospital financially viable. Experts tell us Grady is millions of dollars in debt and could be forced to close.

Date: 11/08/07 6pm duration :17 John Pruitt

Now more details on Grady's financial crisis. The hospital has lost money every year since 2000. Last Spring, Grady eliminated hundreds of positions through layoffs and early retirements. A special task force has recommended a change in leadership to a private not-for-profit board. But the hospital authority has not approved that proposal.

Date: 11/26/07 6am duration :42 Fred Blankenship

Another story we'll be covering for you today... a key vote will take place that could determine Grady Hospital's future. The hospital's board may choose for a non-profit management company to run Grady. Sunday, leaders with Hosea Feed the Hungry and Homeless held a prayer vigil in advance of the vote. Vigil organizers say they weren't sure which way the vote should go, but they asked God for help. Elizabeth Omilami: "We stand here together to pray and ask the Lord to do what is right for his poor people." The hospital's board will take that historic vote this afternoon. It could change the way the financially strapped hospital operates and decide if the doors stay open or shut down. We'll let you know what happens at five.

Date: 11/26/07 6pm, 11pm duration :20 Richard Elliot

Chaos erupted this afternoon at a meeting that could decide the future of Grady Hospital. The hospital board is meeting right now to decide if the cash-strapped facility should become a non-profit corporation. But the meeting stopped when police detained some angry opponents who could not get inside the meeting! Protestors: "Push it! Push it!" Angry protestors literally tried to push their way into the tiny meeting room where the board of trustees was deciding the future of Grady Hospital. But when the protestors got out of hand, police began handcuffing them, including State Senator Vincent Fort, who was furious over what happened. Fort: "I'm ashamed. Shame on Grady." After the meeting was moved into a larger room, the trustees tried to explain that turning over control of the hospital to a non-profit corporation was the only way for it to survive. The agreement hinges on three things: a \$200 million dollar commitment from the city's business, charitable, and philanthropic communities ... plus a commitment from those same communities to raise an additional \$100 million dollars over three years ... plus a written guarantee from state government for an additional \$30 million dollars. While opponents protested the decision, trustees say it was the only way to save Grady.

Date: 11/30/07 5pm

duration 1:15

Diana Davis

Casey Cagle: "I am confident that at the end of the day we're going to save Grady." Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle telling the metro Chamber he believes the deal to hand Grady Hospital operations over to a private board will go forward. Cagle: "And we're going to do something very great – very great – for this great state of Georgia." This just days after the Grady board approved the chamber privatization plan, but with a list of conditions attached. Conditions that include a demand for a written commitment for \$30 million dollars in increased state funding for Grady. Cagle: "I can assure you the state is not going to allow the authority to dictate to them what position the state will take." Chamber president Sam Williams says he's frustrated by what he calls the board's "stringent conditions." Williams: "I think what we're saying to the Grady Board is that the sixteen conditions – some of them are reasonable expectations – some of them are just deal breakers." Williams says all sides are now working behind the scenes to come together. So that the millions of dollars in funding the business community promised Grady if it privatized won't be lost. Williams: "The funders who have come forth and said they'd like to help Grady are very concerned about the stringent conditions that would restrict their ability to things they have to do for their responsibility. So were hopeful that this is going to work out. The clock is ticking. We're very concerned about Grady's future."

Date: 12/18/07 6pm

duration :35

Rachel Kim

Local medical students are joining the fight to save Grady Memorial Hospital. Students from Emory University, Morehouse School of Medicine, Georgia State, and other schools gathered at the capitol today to deliver 500 letters to the governor. The students say they will soon make their selection for residence programs ... and say it's imperative that Grady's future is stable. Anjli Aurora, Healthstat President: "Having our brightest students come and stay in Georgia to practice medicine is what is going to benefit the state of Georgia for years to come." The students are urging lawmakers to put a plan in place for Grady before the start of the legislative session January 14th.

Georgia's Healthcare Report Card

Date: **11/06/07 6am**

duration :35

Fred Blankenship

A new report card says Georgia's health is improving, but we still rank near the bottom. The United Health Foundation just ranked Georgia as the 40th healthiest in the nation. We moved up two spots because fewer Georgians are smoking and more children are getting immunized. But researchers say obesity, and Georgia's rate of infectious disease remain serious concerns. "We're not talking about colds and flus and other common infections we're hearing about. This is a very specific measure that looks at the number of cases of aids, tuberculosis and hepatitis." The report also found the overall health of the nation has declined slightly.

Flu Season Officially Here

Date: **12/30/07 7am**

duration :21

Amanda Rosseter

A health warning as the first *confirmed* case of flu has hit in Georgia. The flu virus was reported in DeKalb County. Health experts say the peak season for flu in Georgia is typically late January through early February. They say there's plenty of vaccine available ... it's not too late. And that getting a shot is your best defense against the flu.

Meth Use Blamed For Georgia's High MRSA Infection Rates

Date: **10/29/07 12pm**

duration :37

Pam Martin

Health officials say Georgia has one of the highest infection rates in the country for MRSA, and the high rate of methamphetamine use is a factor. They say the infection rate of MRSA has skyrocketed in metro Atlanta in the last six years. But investigators tell us the superbug staph infection is spread by contact, which puts everyone at risk. "So you don't have to be a meth user or even know meth users to get MRSA everyone is at some risk to get this disease." Health researchers tell us poor hygiene of meth users raises their chances of developing the disease. They say about 45 Georgians are killed each year by MRSA infections.

Nutritional Watchdog Group Grades Georgia Schools With a "D Minus"

Date: **11/29/07 12pm**

duration :34

Pam Martin

Georgia schools are almost *failing* when it comes to offering students healthy food. A health watchdog group has just released a new school food report card. They gave Georgia a "D minus!" Georgia lost points because our state nutrition policies only apply to elementary schools. Experts say we still need to focus on Middle and High Schools and keep the same high standards. "It's a lot easier to ban junk food and soda in elementary schools because that's not where they're sold. The real problem is middle and high schools." The highest grade, and "A Minus" went to Kentucky and Oregon.