

TELEVISION STATION WSB-TV / ATLANTA
QUARTERLY LISTING OF LOCAL PROGRAMS REFLECTING CONCERNS
AND/OR NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY
JULY 1, 2009 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2009

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ARE LOCALLY PRODUCED. WE ALSO CARRY ABC NETWORK AND SYNDICATED PUBLIC
AFFAIRS PROGRAMS THAT ADDRESS THESE ISSUES.

(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 third quarter, 2009)

QUARTERLY ISSUES / PROGRAMS LIST

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

CRCT Cheating InvestigationDate: **08/18/09 5pm**

duration 1:23

Richard Belcher

Making her 6th annual state of the schools address, Dr. Hall did not face a room full of critics. There were questions, but none about the CRCT investigation that's gone unresolved since early June. And certainly no one mentioned this mid-summer rebuke by Governor Perdue: "I just think it is unconscionable that those people charged in education to educate our kids would take this – really – so cavalierly." The Governor singled out Atlanta school officials after Dr. Hall rejected state findings that there was cheating on an important standardized test given last year at Deerwood Academy. Dr. Hall wrote in early July, 'the district strongly disagrees with the allegations.' And we discovered an email to Dr. Hall from an outside advisor named John Ahmann. At the height of the controversy, he counseled – focus on respecting due process rather than waving the red flag of no evidence present. That will just give the state something to hit at, and they do not care about the facts. Dr. Hall: "Do you believe that? You know, people are entitled to their opinion, but I really want to believe that everybody wants to see the facts. I am a fact-driven person, and base my opinions on facts, and so that's why I said – allow us an opportunity to do an investigation.

Neighbor Group Concerned About School's Use of PortablesDate: **07/13/09 11pm**

duration :37

John Pruitt

Neighbors are gathering signatures in their fight against several portable classrooms in DeKalb County. They say the classroom trailers at Ashford Park Elementary are an eyesore. Neighbors also feel they're in a dangerous spot. They're close to Cravenridge Drive. They point to a recent study showing some drivers on the street going twice the speed limit. "We're concerned about the safety of the children. We're concerned about the appearance of the school. We think kids wandering and taking a wrong turn – wandering out of the trailers are a problem." A DeKalb County school spokesperson says the PTA signed off on the location of the trailers.

Georgia Schools' "Annual Yearly Progress"Date: **07/14/09 6pm**

duration :22

John Pruitt

State school officials have released results of the annual "AYP" or Adequate Yearly Progress." The report shows more than 79% of Georgia's public schools made the list – a 10% jump over 2008. State educators say 58 schools moved up from the "needs improvement" category. The A-Y-P criteria include testing and achievement. One hundred thirteen metro area schools fell short of reaching A-Y-P.

President's Speech to Nation's SchoolchildrenDate: **09/06/09 8am**

duration :45

Linda Stouffer

With their parent's approval – some local students will be able to skip President Obama's education broadcast next week. The President will go on TV at noon Tuesday and tell students to work hard in school. Forsyth County schools are letting parents decide if they want their children to see the speech. Jennifer Caracciolo: "We have received some emails.. and it's divided some want us to show it and some don't so we've asked the teachers to notify parents.. " Richard Lopez: I think it's a ploy. I think waste of our kids' time. I'd rather have them studying in class."

Date: **09/09/09 5am**

duration :40

Fred Blankenship

President Obama's major healthcare speech comes on the heels of a school speech that sparked controversy. Obama: "you cannot drop out of school and just drop into a good job. You've got to train for it and work for it..and learn for it." Channel 2 visited Mary Agnes Jones Elementary in northwest Atlanta Tuesday as the President focused on personal responsibility. He did *not* bring politics into the classroom as some feared. One Cobb County mother took her children home to watch the speech after Kemp Elementary decided *not* to broadcast it. Ayeshia Amon-Ra: "When the commander in chief...the president of the united states says he want to speak to our children about encouraging them about education, there should be no controversy."

Date: **09/07/09 7am**

duration :46

Linda Stouffer

Later today the text of President Obama's planned speech to the nation's school children will be available on the White House website. Education Secretary Arne Duncan says the President's speck Tuesday will be about personal responsibility and challenging students to take education seriously. Some parents have said they're afraid the President will try to indoctrinate children with a democratic agenda. In DeKalb County, students will have the opportunity to watch the speech, if their parents agree. Cherokee County officials say parents are being notified, and students have a chance to opt out. Gwinnett schools will air the speech live, or a teacher may record it. And the City of Atlanta says it's up to individual schools. School officials say they'll respect parents who don't want their children to see the speech.

Clayton Principal Faces Sanctions for Discipline Issue

Date: **09/25/09 6pm**

duration :20

John Pruitt

Channel 2 has learned that state authorities have revoked the teaching certificate of a Clayton County high school principal and suspended her assistant principal for three months. The sanctions arose because the two mishandled a case involving a sex video on a student's cell phone.

Longer School Day Discussed

Date: **09/28/09 6pm**

duration :37

John Pruitt

Extended school days are nothing new for students at one metro Atlanta charter school. But President Obama believes it's something *all* American students should do. A typical day at Kipp Ways Academy in NW Atlanta starts at 7:15am and ends around 5:00pm. Students also attend classes two Saturdays a month. We talked with an eighth grader who says after adjusting to the extended schedule it is great preparation. Asile Patin: "Because the regular work day is 9-5 anyway so we're getting prepared for our future." The president of Georgia's Association of Educators says Obama's idea could benefit students but questions where the state would get the money.

Catoosa County School Display of Bible Verses Draws Complaint

Date: **09/30/09 5pm**

duration 1:35

Richard Elliot

This controversy is about some bible verses on signs – and where the law says students are allowed to show them. This is one of the bible verse signs Catoosa County cheerleaders are not allowed to show at football games. A parent complained that since the cheerleaders are an official school organization, and the football game is a school function, the sign is unconstitutional. The superintendent agreed, and banned them. Denia Reese: "I think it's a wonderful religious message." The decision is not popular in Catoosa County. Bill Nigut of the Anti-Defamation League realizes what a tough decision that was and sent a letter of support to the superintendent. He says the ADL

doesn't want to stifle the students' religious expression. They support it. They just want to see it done in a way that's not unconstitutional. Nigut: "It's perfectly legal ... outside of the school." Some parents believe the decision is wrong and vow to fight it. Ironically, the Christian law association agrees the bible verse signs may violate the law, so it's encouraging individual students and parents to make their own signs and bring them to games.

Teacher Furloughs Approved

Date: **07/28/09 6pm** duration :33 Jovita Moore

The state Board of Education cleared the way for local school districts to begin teacher furloughs. The board officially cut the number of mandatory days teachers have to be in the classroom. The decision also gives the governor the ability to increase the number of furlough days from three to seven. Kathy Cox: "It's a very bad situation, we also know local revenues are down, its tough to start the school year this way." The state saves \$33 million dollars each day public school teachers are furloughed. So far, Cobb and DeKalb Counties have decided to reallocate money to keep their teachers in class.

Date: **08/21/09 04:37:56** duration :32 Justin Farmer

Some Georgia college students now are concerned about furlough days. Officials at Georgia State and UGA this week announced more unpaid days off for workers through next June. It's a result of the state's deep budget crisis. Some GSU students we talked with say the furloughs could be a setback for education. GSU student Camille Crosby: "I don't think that this is the right place to push back things. maybe not give as much aid or something like that..but not on the teachers..not education." GSU wmployees will have eight furlough days. UGA employees will have six days by june of next year.

Effects of State's Tightened Education Budget

Date: **08/02/09 5pm** duration 1:20 Lori Geary

Geary: "Is there a point where you go to the governor and say 'we can't handle any more cuts. Don't think that there haven't already been some of those discussions." Even with those discussions, Governor Perdue said state revenues gave him no choice but to make more painful cuts to all state agencies, including education. Cox: "What's been that kick-in-the-gut feeling is that we just came off a banner year of achievement. And then – bam – that's great but there's no money." Take a look at these numbers ... in fiscal year 2009 Georgia's education budget was cut more than 10% ... \$1.8 billion dollars. So far this year, more than \$600 million in cuts along with three days worth of teacher furloughs ... and the worst may not be over. Cox: "We don't yet feel like Georgia is in a position to say we're turning around." So ... what can parents and students expect as the new school year is about to start. Cox says bigger class sized in K-8; old text books; cuts in bus service for extracurricular activities and current routes. Cox: "It's clear that we are on of the state's suffering the most. I think this is a time to analyze just about everything we do or require in education and ask the question ... is there a better way to do it with less money?"

APS Superintendent Reports on "State of the Schools"

Date: **08/18/09 6pm** duration 1:18 Monica Pearson

The Carter Center was packed this morning to hear Atlanta's award winning superintendent sharing the good news. Hall: "APS is becoming a model urban school district." And the numbers back up Dr. Hall's words. The district has seen a nearly 32% jump in graduation rates, and from Grady on the northeast side to Carver on the south side, the numbers keep climbing past 90%. Hall says Carver's turn-around shows it can be done anywhere. Hall: "In order to continue student achievement we have to have an effective teacher in every class in Atlanta every day." It's no time for balloons and champagne. State budgets are cutting money to schools and education programs. Not

only those in education are appalled, so is big business. "Education is the root of economic development. The number 1 reason why companies come to Georgia is to hire a talented and educated work force." Furthermore, companies grading various cities for possible relocation look to the quality of the school systems for employees' families. Dr. Hall says she'll fight vigorously for any federal monies. "The President's stimulus package ...we intend to apply for."

EDUCATION SPECIAL: Our Schools, Our Kids, Our Future

Date: **08/24/09 8:00-9:00pm**

Monica Pearson, Justin Farmer, Jovita Moore, John Pruitt

An eye-opening look into the state of education in Georgia. In a primetime special, we show you the bad: Georgia's dropout problem and children allowed to graduate even though they can barely read. But we'll also show you the good: Georgia's virtual schools – and 'no excuse' schools, where students are excelling.

APS Investigated in CRCT Cheating Probe

Date: **07/20/09 5pm**

duration 2:02

Richard Belcher

Atlanta Superintendent Dr. Beverly Hall infuriated Governor Perdue when she rejected the state's conclusion that answers were changed on an important standardized test. Early last month, Dr. Hall clearly stated that the cheating part of the investigation was over. It wasn't until last week that Superintendent Hall told reporters her external investigation is still underway. State officials say emphatically that answers were changed on a CRCT administered at Atlanta's Deerwood Academy last summer. In June, Superintendent Hall wrote the state that the school system had hired it's own external investigator and "the portion of that investigation focusing on the cheating charge is completed and concludes that there is no evidence, no basis in fact that someone altered students answers." We know now that Atlanta lawyer Penn Payne is the external investigator whose work provided the basis for Dr. Hall's letter. But the school system denied our formal request for documents about how Ms. Payne was selected. Ms. Payne's website indicates her strengths are mediation and arbitration disputes. Also mentioned are investigations of employee complaints for corporations. But if Dr. Hall says the cheating part of the investigation is completed, what exactly is Ms. Payne investigating? The Superintendent has not made herself available to answer questions about the change in the system's position, but Governor Perdue told us last week he clearly wants to hear something different from Atlanta. Perdue: "I think that she may have been the victim of – bad advice – and as executives we try to...trust and defend our people until it's indefensible and I hope that she will continue to do that, and I'm encouraged to hear that. We also spoke with LaChandra Butler Burks, the Chair of the Atlanta School Board. She said her schedule would not allow her to speak to us on camera, but she told me she had always known the external investigation was still continuing. When it will be completed – and the results released to the public – we don't know.

Date: **07/30/09 5pm**

duration 1:15

Richard Belcher

Atlanta, and Superintendent Beverly Hall, initially refused even to give us the name of the outside investigator on whom the Superintendent relied when she rejected the state's findings. But the system finally relented, telling us the work is being done by Atlanta attorney Penn Payne. APS refuses to tell us how much it is paying Ms. Payne to investigate the cheating allegations, but her billing records for an earlier personnel investigation reveal that she charged \$250 dollars an hour. The cost of that investigation was nearly \$18,000 dollars. But there is no way to know what the system will have to pay for the ongoing investigation about CRCT cheating at Deerwood Academy. The system tells that investigation may not be over for another week or two. We also learned today the school system hired public relations consulting Jeff Dickerson right before the scandal broke. He's earning \$2,000 dollars a month – among other things – to create opportunities for media opinion leaders to meet the superintendent and to draft and place Op-Eds in the media. The system could use some PR help. Governor Perdue was outraged by Atlanta's rejection of the state's finding. Perdue: "I just think it's unconscionable that those people charged in education to educate our kids would take this really so cavalierly."

Healthcare Reform Plans Spark Numerous Public DebatesDate: **07/27/09 6am**

duration :21

Fred Blankenship

Congressman John Lewis is hosting a town hall meeting on health care today. The forum will give residents a chance to ask questions about the proposals in Washington. Several state officials are scheduled to attend the event at Ebenezer Baptist Church. The town hall is from 9:00-11:00am. President Obama had hoped congress would pass health care legislation before the August recess.

Date: **08/10/09 11pm**

duration 1:10

Darryn Moore

“So kiss my friggin sassafrass about what somebody else should get when my parents friggin work for it.” The health care debate was more heated outside than it was inside the town hall meeting which was secured by police and security. There were bursts of shouting and applause during the discussion about President Obama’s universal health care plan. Factions on both sides were not shy in sharing their opinions. James Hall, Universal Health Care Supporter: “We should eliminate disparities for all people and make health care affordable.” Rebekah Vepraskas, opponent: “I don’t want Washington telling me that I can or can’t have a procedure done, I can or can’t have a pap smear. Democratic Congressman Hank Johnson put together this town hall meeting and expressed his support of government-run health care reform. Johnson: “So many Americans die of treatable illness every day because they can’t afford proper health insurance.” But not everyone agreed with the Congressman’s approach which was met with a range of emotions. Amy Roscoe, Health Care Opponent: “He wasn’t into a debate He was there to tell us to ram something down our throat as Congress and the Senate have been doing the entire time.” Supporter Beatrice Williams: “And everybody deserve(s) medical care...I don't think I should have it and you shouldn't.”

Date: **08/11/09 12pm**

duration :33

Carol Sbarge

We don’t know if the vandalism is related, but Congressman David Scott is one of those fielding tough questions about health care reform. Scott is defending his decision to *cut off* debate over healthcare at a recent Town Hall. He said the meeting’s agenda did *not* include a detailed debate over health care reform. Scott: “You want a meeting with me on healthcare, I’ll give it to you. You come on August 24th. That’s when I’m having my meeting on healthcare. Congressman Scott says he will also answer health care questions this Saturday. He’s sponsoring a health fair in Jonesboro that day.

Date: **08/11/09 6pm**

duration 1:19

Ross Cavitt

“It has no place in this debate.” We were there when Congressman Scott got his first look at his spray-painted sign. “But this here, and some of the other things bubbling up, that’s ugly business.” The other things the congressman is referring to are some vicious emails, faxes and phone messages sent to his office after he stepped front and center in the health care debate. “This is not a health care event. You chose to come here!” Scott’s confrontation with a doctor talking health care at a transportation-themed town hall made the internet and talk show rounds, fueling the fires over what is rational debate and what is simply... “it is just hate speech, it’s just noise.” Thomas Hunt is a 13th district resident who came to drop off his opinion of the health care issue and saw the sign. Smyrna police came out to Scott’s office, took pictures, looked for evidence and planned to review nearby security cameras, but so far have no suspects. Scott hopes this sign is the beginning of the end.

Date: **08/16/09 6am**

duration **1:15**

John Bachman

A crowd of people waited for a checkup, and a chance to debate health care reform. Inside the free clinic, doctors checked patients while blood pressures rose down the hall. Congressman David Scott sponsored both his 5th annual health fair, and another health care reform town hall debate. Scott: "We wanted to open it up to combine it with a health care forum as well." Scott is promoting President Obama's plan for reform. "[with] the high cost of health insurance ... if we don't do anything about this, it's going to take us right off the cliff. So we don't have too much of a choice. [The] status quo is unacceptable." He had plenty of supporters on hand. Supporter Konfor Nasanje: "I am very much in favor of the public option. Because it is an option, when you have an option, it means you have choices." There were also plenty of people pushing against the plan. Phyllis Black: "I want to voice my opinion against all this socialistic medicine." Opponent Johnathan Thomas: "If we concentrated on the chronically uninsured and insure them through a private policy, we could do that much much cheaper than we can by expanding government. And our economy is in dire straits, and this is the last thing we need." There was a security presence, but the spirited debate never escalated out of control.

Date: **08/16/09 11pm**

duration **:38**

Linda Stouffer

Georgia's US Representative Tom Price spoke out today about President Obama's health care reform plan. The Republican congressman addressed the issue on CNN's State of the Union. Price: "There are positive ways to solve this problem without throwing everything out and making it so that the government is running the show." President Obama says he is confident his drive to overhaul health care will succeed. The Secretary of Health and Human Services also suggests the White House is ready to accept non-profit insurance cooperatives instead of a government-run public option in a health overhaul plan. And many lawmakers now believe there are definite signs that a compromise is in the works.

Date: **08/24/09 5pm**

duration **:33**

John Pruitt

Today, the Concerned Black Clergy of Metropolitan Atlanta urged members to support the public option in health care reform. In a news conference, member pastors called on all clergy to get involved with the debate about health care reform. Rev Richard Cobble: "and it's high time that we come out of our synagogues, come out of our mosques, come out of our churches, come out of our temple and be able to speak with one voice in order to help our people to understand the truth. Speakers said that for the religious community, health care coverage is not a political or financial issue, but a moral issue.

Date: **08/31/09 6pm**

duration **:31**

John Pruitt

A task force made up of church members from all over metro Atlanta took their health care reform fight to Senator Johnny Isakson's office today. Larry Soublet: "We have approximately a thousand postcards that we're going to deliver and eventually we hope to deliver 3000 postcards - all in favor of the public option." The Able Health Care task force is a multi-racial, interfaith coalition of congregations, unions and grassroots organizers. Members held signs outside the senator's office - all in favor of the public insurance option. Senator Isakson does not support that measure.

Area Prepares for Possible Flu Pandemic

Date: **07/29/09 6am**

duration **:30**

Linda Stouffer

We expect new developments today out of Atlanta as the nation deals with the swine flu pandemic. Today health leaders will discuss who might get the first swine flu vaccines. That advisory panel meets today here in Atlanta to

make recommendations. Doctors say pregnant women should be a priority. They make up 6% of swine flu deaths in the US, but just 1% of the population. Experts say health care workers will also have priority.

Date: **08/28/09 6pm**

duration :35

Monica Pearson

Some Georgia children are among the first to test a vaccine for the swine flu virus. Three weeks ago, doctors injected Brayden Huguenard with the H1N1 vaccine. His parents and researchers closely are monitoring any changes in his health. His doctor says Brayden and the other children vaccinated have not had any severe reactions. Brayden's father says it is worth the risk. Huguenard: "We know they're trying to get this to market as quickly as they can so we know that they needed people to participate in the study so the sooner they can get this approved and to market the better for everybody." The vaccine is scheduled for release later this fall.

Date: **09/04/09 11pm**

duration 1:28

Diana Davis

Twelve-year-old Morgan Fwembro was worried when she came down with swine flu at school. Mother Adryan Fwenbro: "She's been hearing about the deaths and I said 'that's just a small number compared to the number of people who actually have it.' But pediatrician's offices and emergency departments all over Atlanta are 2-3 times more crowded than usual. Worried parents and kids are quickly learning that most of the time there's nothing to worry about. Doctor: "We're also not treating healthy kids except with Motrin or Tylenol and plenty of fluids." Pediatricians say it's best to treat symptoms at home unless you notice these red flags. Dr Jim Fortenberry, Children's Health Care: "If your child is having difficulty breathing; if your child or infant is less than three months old and has a temperature greater than 100.3; if they are dehydrated and not able to keep fluids down or if they are just not waking up well." Daycares are keeping kids' hands washed; watching for fevers; sending sick kids home to reduce the risk of spreading flu. Laura Vandewiele, Clifton School Day Care: "I have one class of infants that about half the class is out." And home is the best place for sick kids. Doctors say to treat swine flu like regular flu. Don't come to the doctor unless the symptoms get worse. Wash hands and most of all stay home.

Date: **09/14/09 5am**

duration 1:05

Ashley Hayes

A few weeks into the new school year, and students at Margaret Harris Comprehensive School in DeKalb County have been out of classes again. This time not for a relaxing break. Thirty-two percent of the school's population, including 5 staff members and the principal are sick with high temperatures and flu-like symptoms. One person has been hospitalized, leaving many to believe this could be the swine flu. Begging the question ... when will there be a vaccine? Secretary of HHS Kathleen Sebelius: ""we are on track to have an ample supply rolling by the middle of October but we may have some early vaccine as early as the first full week in October. We'll get the vaccine out the door as fast as it rolls off the production line." Sebelius says the good news is it appears the swine flu vaccine will be highly effective as a one dose shot rather than the originally predicted two. Who will be able to receive the vaccines? "Every state has a plan saying these are the sites to get the vaccine as quickly as possible into people's arms. That's where the distribution will be." As for students, class is back in session today. DeKalb school leaders hope the few days off offered a hiatus from the germs.

Date: **09/25/09 12pm**

duration :30

Fred Blankenship

New information about the swine flu vaccine. The Obama administration now says more of the vaccine will be available than previously thought. Health Secretary Kathleen Sebelius says between six and seven million doses will arrive by the first week of October. That's double earlier estimates. Most of the H1N1 vaccine will be the nasal spray version. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will also release new information this afternoon.

Grady Board Considers Closing Dialysis Clinic

Date: **09/14/09 06:40:01** duration :20

Fred Blankenship

The Board at Grady Hospital will meet this afternoon to discuss closing the dialysis clinic. The issue is not without controversy and has drawn criticism. Some of those people against the closure will protest outside the hospital before the meeting gets underway. They also plan to express their concerns to the board inside the meeting.

Date: **09/26/09 12:47:39** duration :23

Linda Stouffer

A judge now has lifted a temporary restraining order blocking Grady Hospital from closing its outpatient dialysis center. Patients and advocates rallied earlier this month asking the court to step in. But late Friday, a judge cancelled the restraining order saying many patients lacked the legal standing to make a request in court. A Grady spokesperson told Channel 2 the dialysis clinic will close in about a week.

Georgia Experiences Record Unemployment Levels

Date: 07/15/09 11pm

duration :32

Monica Pearson

Georgia now is experiencing record unemployment. The state Labor Department tells us the unemployment rate hit 10.1% in June. That's up half a point from May. State Labor Commissioner Michael Thurmond predicts Georgia's unemployment rate could reach 11%. Michael Thurmond: "The road to recovery in Georgia will be long and difficult. The economy is now predicted to turn around in 2010, which means we'll have some difficult months in the short term." Commissioner Thurmond says Georgia got hit hard by job losses in manufacturing, construction and retail.

Date: **07/23/09 6am****duration 1:00****Darren Lyn**

Atlanta resident Clifton Boyce has a job as a security guard, but he's feeling the economic pinch around him, especially with Atlanta's unemployment rate rising from 9.5% in May to 10.7% in June. Boyce: "A lot of my friends are out of work a lot of my neighbors are out of work so it's pretty bad." The unemployment rate in Georgia is 10.1%. But the numbers are higher in DeKalb County at 10.6%. Fulton County is at 11% and Clayton County is at 12.6%. Michael Thurmond, Dept. of Labor Commissioner: "All the economists suggest that unemployment will continue to rise – this is more than a recession – it's a restructuring." However the unemployment rates are lower in Cobb County at 9.8%. Gwinnett and Hall Counties are both at 9.6%. Boyce: "I think most people are optimistic for the future but we'll see, we just have to wait and see."

Date: 08/02/09 6am

duration 1:33

Lori Geary

Mayce Robinson: "I've been out for about ten months now." Mayce Robinson is one of almost a half a million unemployed Georgians. I talked to Robinson at what the state calls a career center – or what many refer to as the unemployment office. Two hundred thousand Georgians are receiving state or federal unemployment benefits. Robinson's state benefits dried up four months ago ... labor commissioner Michael Thurmond warns Georgia's unemployment insurance trust fund could be next. Thurmond: "Unfortunately, I'm convinced things will continue to get worse before they get better." Right now Georgia has \$596 million dollars in the fund – back in December it had more than a billion dollars! But in the past two months, the state paid out more than \$300 million dollars in benefits – a record high. Are we in jeopardy of running out? The next 60 days are critical. Earlier this year Georgia's trust fund got a \$220 million dollar boost from federal stimulus money. Thurmond says he just returned from Washington begging for more help. Thurmond: "If we don't see a real turnaround or turning the corner in the economy, obviously we're gonna look at ways to supplement the money in the trust fund." Robinson: "I've come to the realization I need to start my own thing." Robinson says he's fed up applying for jobs that aren't available. He got laid off from a lawn care service and is getting ready to start his own ... hopefully before he runs out of unemployment checks. Robinson: "People out there, if you see me knocking on your door, that would be me."

Minimum Wage Raise Goes Into EffectDate: **07/20/09 12pm****duration :38****John Pruitt**

This week, thousands of Georgians working at or below minimum wage can expect a raise. On Friday, the federal minimum wage will rise from \$6.55 an hour to \$7.25 an hour. Seventy-five thousand Georgia workers will benefit from the .70 cents an hour increase. Some economists worry that the government-mandated raise will force small businesses to lay off workers. "Our profit margins right now are extremely small. Although the minimum wage was expected and we could plan for it, with the way the economy is down, it's affected the way we're able to hire." Nationally, food preparation and service jobs account for 53% of minimum wage workers.

State Budget Cuts Raise Concerns

Date: 07/22/09 5pm

duration 1:23

Lori Geary

Col Hitchens: "The state patrol, the troopers are the ones that are gonna bear the brunt of this, but they're not complaining." They're not complaining because in this economy ... furloughs for Georgia's 820 troopers are better than layoffs. Col Bill Hitchens who heads Georgia's Department of Public Safety is crunching numbers and cutting again. Last year he had to cut his budget of \$118 million by 15% down to \$100 million. The Governor has just ordered another 5% cut for most agencies on top of three day furloughs for all state employees. That's a \$900 million dollar savings for the state. Hitchens: "We wish it wasn't occurring but we're gonna make the best of it, three days really isn't that horrible in five months. I don't think the public will ever notice that." The state's teachers, though, are noticing. Jorgene West, First Grade Teacher: "I think it's a really bad idea, teachers work really hard and we're already putting in hours that we're not being paid for." I caught up with several teachers as they shopped for supplies at The School Box store in Tucker. This year, there are \$100 dollar gift cards from the state. As the school year is about to start, the teachers just got word three of their paid planning days are gone. West: "We have been protected in the past but apparently no one is protected any more." Simone: "It's almost as though what we do is not equated in what we get paid for. We are already underpaid as professionals." Hitchens: "Everybody is feeling the economic downturn, things could be a whole lot worse."

Convention Center Predicts Losses

Date: 07/29/09 6pm

duration :20

John Pruitt

The Georgia World Congress Center is predicting even greater losses due to the economy. The convention centre says it lost \$1.3 million in the fiscal year which just ended. And officials think it will get much worse. With projected losses of \$5.7 million this year. Many companies are cancelling conventions and trade shows are scaling back.

Despite Economy, UGA Fundraising Going Well

Date: 08/05/09 6am

duration :24

Fred Blankenship

The sagging economy is not stopping the University of Georgia from having a banner fundraising year. UGA set a new record, bringing in \$110 million dollars in donations for the fiscal year that ended in June. In addition to the record donations, the school says it had an additional 3,000 donors. The funding boost is contrary to a national trend of falling college contributions.

Economic's Expert's Forecast for Atlanta

Date: 08/26/09 5pm

duration 1:20

Jovita Moore

"At least I'm optimistic. I'm using the word recovery right." Georgia State's Rajeev Dhawan gave his annual economic predictions, and says the free fall is over, but key factors to full recovery are missing. "So it's going to be bouncing on the bottom quite a few data but the issue is what's going to propel growth; what's going to produce jobs." Dhawan believes industries and businesses remain scared. "In the national economy I always emphasized investment. You do the investment today, you'll reap the benefits tomorrow from the jobs." Dhawan says metro Atlanta has hinged growth on construction, and that has to start again – for any chances of new capital. "If you do not construct new, you're not going to have the multi-plat effect as we call it and you're not gonna have the growth – the jobs, the tax revenues, and everything." Dhawan believes consumer confidence continues to fluctuate because of the loss of jobs. Many at the job fair in Decatur would probably agree. Stephanie Rice (Conyers): "...rough terrible situations I never thought I'd be in as far as no income ." Gregory Towns (Loganville): "I

think we're coming near to hitting the bottom and I foresee things are gonna start progressing in the future." Dhawan says incomes have to grow again as well before Atlanta really gets back on its feet.

Date: **08/26/09 6pm** **duration :14** **Jovita Moore**

A Georgia State professor says forget consumer confidence – it's the mood and confidence of CEO's that need to get better to help the economy grow. Dr. Rajeev Dhawan says until investing and financing crank up again – recovery will be slow moving.

Date: **08/27/09 6am** **duration :31** **Fred Blankenship**

When it comes to the forecast for the economy, some experts believe the free fall of the recession is over. That was the word this week from Dr. Rajeev Dhawan in his annual economic forecast. He says Atlanta's growth has hinged on new construction. And once that resumes, money should be flowing again. Dhawan: "If you do not construct new you not going to have the multi-plat effect as we call it and you're not gonna have the growth the jobs the tax revenues and everything..." Dr. Dhawan says it will be the end of next year before recovery really hits.

Union City to Get 550 New Jobs

Date: **09/30/09 5pm** **duration 1:30** **Lori Geary**

Soon, this site in Union City not far from Hartsfield Jackson International Airport will be home to 550 new high-paying jobs. The Dendreon Corporation is a biotech company that will build a 160,000 square foot facility here and is expected to manufacture cutting-edge medicine for patients with advanced prostate cancer. Governor Perdue: "The global economy is down, but companies on the move like Dendreon are still looking for the right locations." Five hundred fifty jobs initially, average salary? Dr. Gold: "we're not going to comment on that but the average salary for a biotech worker is much higher that come into these facilities." In fact, the most recent report from the Selig Centers shows the average salary in biotech medicine manufacturing is almost \$90,000 per year – more than double the state's overall average salary of just over \$42,000. Perdue: "What it says is we've not slowed up, when revenue is down, when things are challenging, revenue is threatened. We've worked hard." Georgia offered several incentives to get Dendreon here. It's the first company in the so-called Union City opportunity zone. The biotech company will get a \$3,500 tax credit for each new job created over the next five years for a total of almost \$10 million dollars in savings. Georgia will also provide free work force training. Governor Perdue says he hopes this is just another step in attracting more biotech business. Perdue: "This builds critical mass for our overall bio effort."

Churches Suffer As Economic Woes Bring Tithing Rates Down

Date: **07/15/09 5pm** **duration 1:50** **Jim Strickland**

Construction materials at a south Fulton church, left idle for months, this is more than a mess, it's an illustration of how insidious the current economic malaise really is. Greater Faith Church: where grand plans meet stark reality. Pastor Sedric Hamner has been ready for months to hire construction crews to remodel this outbuilding into a new youth facility. Eight thousand dollars worth of construction supplies have been sitting her since January. Hamner: "We have material to complete this building, but we have run out of money, thanks to the wonderful looming economy." Hamner can't do any hiring because his own congregation's job status has been so perilous. "Our church has really been hit significantly in terms of giving, we're down about 50% with our receipts." The delay in this project is a small part of a much larger problem. The Association General Contractor of America says construction employment in Georgia stands at 175,00 – the majority of that in metro Atlanta. In the last year, those numbers are down 16% statewide, and 18% in the metro. Even the children waiting for this project to start relate to unemployment numbers like those. Hamner: "I hear stories from my children of how parents are losing

their jobs and moving from place to place, so they're very much aware of the economic problems of our time." This project is about \$25,000 dollars short; completion is four months behind and counting.

Gingrich Proposes Tax Restructure

Date: **07/17/09 6pm**

duration :33

John Pruitt

Today former House Speaker Newt Gingrich says there are ways to *boost* the nation's economy right now. He's part of a coalition about to unveil "The American Solutions Tax Plan." Gingrich: "A 50% reduction on social security and Medicare tax for two years. Including the employers match; includes matching China on capital gains ... which is zero; and matching Ireland on corporate tax rate which is 12.5% and eliminating death tax." Gingrich spoke to conservatives today in Atlanta. He said state governments facing huge revenue shortfalls, like Georgia, must find smarter ways to save.

6Pp HOME VALUES GA PKG

Date: **09/10/09 6pm**

duration 1:18

File Master:

Length: 01:18

Writer: JU*

Editor: feeds

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THINGS ARE BETTER THAN A YEAR AGO.

16:54 oh definitely. i think in the short term consumer confidence is really up.

REALTOR CHRISTY HARRIS PUTS THE UNDER CONTRACT SIGN ON THIS ATLANTA HOME.

17:00 i see a lot more traffic, a lot more people out there looking to buy homes.

JEFF FEE OF VERTICAL MORTGAGE SAYS FIRST-TIME BUYERS ARE BUYING UP MANY OF THE FORECLOSED PROPERTIES, ON AVERAGE AT PRICES 20 % BELOW THEIR PEAK IN 2006.

7:34 the majority of the foreclosures between 100-300k have washed thru the system and we may soon see some relief there.

BUT THE PROS ARE SAYING THE HIGHER-PRICED HOME MARKET COULD STAY FLAT AT LEAST 2 MORE YEARS LARGELY BECUASE THERE ARE SO MANY MORE SELLERS THAN BUYERS AND BECAUSE BUYERS ARE NOW REQUIRED TO HAVE MUCH MORE CASH AT CLOSING.

21:22 there's less demand for those more expensive houses. they're not selling, so our inventory levels are higher.

BUT REAL ESTATE IS HYPER-LOCAL AND WE FOUND SELLERS INSIDE THE PERIMETER ARE NOT OFFERING DEEP DISCOUNTS.

9:40 so far, people seem to have their heels dug in pretty good.

MIKE STINSON IS MOVING TO ATLANTA FROM K.C., BUT IS HAVING A HARD TIME FINDING AN IN-TOWN HOME AT A PRICE HE LIKES.

10:32 I think there's more inventory in the burbs than where we're looking.

17:30 A lot of that is employment. there's more employment downtown and midtown and people want to be close to the work place.

trt 1:18

Illegal Asbestos Dumping in Shopping Center Renovation

Date: 08/20/09 6pm

duration :36

Monica Pearson

A southwest Atlanta shopping center is at the center of an illegal dumping case. A hazardous materials worker has been carefully removing everything from a dumpster behind the center. It comes after an Environmental Protection Agency investigator found floor tiles containing asbestos in the dumpster. Someone called the EPA after becoming concerned since construction work was being done at the shopping center. "The dumpster itself is not configured to handle asbestos waste. it's just a typical sanitary waste dumpster." The EPA says it's not unusual to find asbestos in older buildings, but it must be properly removed and disposed of.

Date: 08/21/09 12pm

duration :36

Justin Farmer

A careful asbestos removal project is underway at a southwest Atlanta shopping center. Hazardous materials workers are removing everything from a dumpster behind the Cascade Heights shopping center on Cascade Road. An Environmental Protection Agency investigator says he found floor tiles containing asbestos in the dumpster. Nearby employees we spoke with were stunned about the discovery. Employee: "In fact I'm shocked I mean that's a health hazard. It's very dangerous for it going on right next door to us and in our backyard." The shopping center is under construction. The landlord could face fines for not properly disposing of the tiles.

Blight on Area Hemlock Trees

Date: 07/19/09 5pm

duration :24

John Pruitt

There are products homeowners can use to treat their infested hemlocks again, the key ingredient is "imidacloprid." Foresters use a stronger version. Imidacloprid works ... although there are environmental concerns including its possible impact on honey bees and birds. With all the effort to save the hemlocks, forestry experts fear they are fighting a losing battle because the adelgids already have such a strong hold on Georgia's forests.

Mayor Attends Meeting on "Mega Region" Collaborative Proposal

Date: 08/12/09 6pm

duration :36

Justin Farmer

Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin is heading home after two days of talks with partners in a so called "mega region." Mayors from several cities within the area stretching from Raleigh to Birmingham met. Their goal – to find common ground and common solutions to problems affecting the entire region. Franklin: "Our ability to collaborate on issues of water, transportation and high speed rail will benefit people who live in Atlanta. Produce better jobs, greener environment, where investment comes from around the world."

UGA Gets Poor Grades in Environmental Responsibility

Date: 09/14/09 6am

duration :20

Fred Blankenship

The University of Georgia is not making the grade when it comes to the environment. A new report by the American Association of sustainability and higher education gave the university a "D" School leaders say a new \$6 million dollar federal stimulus grant for energy efficiency will help. The university will use the money for upgrades that will use less energy.

Georgia's Right to Use Lake Lanier as Water Supply is Challenged

Date: 07/17/09 6pm

duration 1:07

Jeff Dore

No one doubts metro Atlanta survives on the water stored in Lake Lanier. Clearly, the US Army Corps of Engineers has enabled the metro area's growth by enabling the use of that water. I did it, the court ruled, without the backing of law." Sally Bethea, who leads the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, the environmental group for sustaining a quality river, wasn't completely surprised. Bethea: "He's been indicating he's been going in this direction. Now the fact that's concluded that none of the water in the lake or the river is legally available for water supply pursuant to the Corps' Operation of Buford Dam is more far reaching than we expected, for sure." In effect, she says, the court has said the states need to get the issue settled politically, out of the court ... within three years ... or else. For 20 years, they've failed to do that. Bethea: "The situation is not that surprising. It is very frightening in many ways. But hopefully leaders will come forward and will get the work done so we have the water we need upstream and downstream."

Date: 08/09/09 7am

duration :22

Linda Stouffer

Governor Perdue is promising to play *hardball* in the tri-state water wars. The issue is Georgia's right to Lake Lanier as a water source. Governor Sonny Perdue says he'll focus on Florida's environmental record. And a 150 year old ruling that could give Alabama *less* control. A federal judge gave the states three years to work out a deal. He also said congress should get involved.

Country Club Fined for Water Use Violations

Date: 07/15/09 6pm

duration :19

Monica Pearson

The US Environmental Protection Agency slaps a local golf course with a big fine. The EPA fined Capital City Club \$157,000 dollars for violations at the Brookhaven golf course. The EPA cited the golf course for storm water-related violations of the clean water act. In March, the state fined Capital City Club \$150,000 dollars

Study Underway to Examine Abnormalities in Area Fish Population

Date: 07/18/09 11pm

duration :20

John Pruitt

UGA researchers will take a closer look at the Oconee River in an environmental impact study. They're trying to determine what effect estrogens – especially synthetic ones – have on fish. No one has ever tried to see what impact the chemicals have on Georgia rivers. Some research has shown estrogen affected fish differently according to gender.

Date: 07/20/09 5am

duration :20

Carol Sbarge

UGA researchers want to know what kind of impact chemicals are having on fish. Until now, no one has tried to measure the impact "environmental estrogens" have had on fish in Georgia's rivers. In other rivers researchers have found quite a bit of the chemical. In some cases male fish started producing female egg proteins and females started producing fewer viable eggs.

Candidate for Governor Proposes New Road Project

Date: 09/07/09 5pm

duration 1:22

Jeff Dore

In a campaign video, state Insurance Commissioner John Oxendine proposes a road parallel to the downtown Connector to let north-south traffic bypass downtown congestion. He told us the need is crucial. Oxendine, candidate for governor: "If we do not address the connector issue, I'll tell you what's gonna happen, the city of Atlanta will die. Jobs will leave the city of Atlanta. Leslie Bryan is president of Morningside/Lenox Park Association. She remembers people tying themselves to trees, facing down bulldozers and facing arrest to fight the Presidential Parkway and, before that, the proposed I-485 through her neighborhood. It, too, was a connector bypass. Bryan: "We've fought this fight. We've won. And if he tries to do it, we'll win again." Oxendine says modern roads can be more like parks. Oxendine: "You have roads that can be underground in tunnels. You have roads that can be in trenches that you never ever see." Bryan: "That's a lovely idea. We all know a road is a road is a road. And in order to build it, whether you build it above ground, underground, line it with flowers, put up barriers, you're going to see it, you're going to destroy the very nature of these wonderful neighborhoods.

Date: **09/12/09 5am**

duration :32

Linda Stouffer

A proposal to give drivers an alternative to the downtown connector is causing controversy. The dotted line marks the new highway that would run parallel to the Downtown Connector. Candidate for Governor John Oxendine is proposing the highway. Critics say the problem is it would run through several neighborhoods. Leslie Bryan: "To me what's really astounding is the anti-Atlanta position that he's taking by suggesting cutting through some of the city's most vibrant lively thriving neighborhoods." Oxendine argues modern roads can be more like parks, and even run underground.

Red Light Camera Exonerates Ticketed Speeder

Date: 07/22/09 5am

duration :34

Fred Blankenship

A traffic case involving a Georgia State student is dismissed. Braxton Davis received a citation for running a red light at the intersection of Boulevard and Freedom Parkway in northeast Atlanta. This video shows he stopped and did not run the light! However, Braxton paid the fine, which the city considers a plea of admission. Davis: "At the end of the day, it was a principal matter, he didn't find guilty for running the traffic light which was the initial issue." The prosecutor dropped the case. However, Braxton will pay \$35 dollars for insufficient funds when the city tried to cash his check for the citation.

Weekend Connector Construction Promises Traffic Headaches

Date: 07/24/09 5pm

duration 1:15

Jeff Dore

The seven lanes of zooming northbound traffic through the middle of Atlanta will turn into a four lane free-for-all of frustration. The D.O.T. has supports in place for a new off-ramp to the 17th Street bridge and this weekend will hoist giant beams on top of them. You don't want to be under them. Crystal Paulk-Buchanan: "We got 40 beams to set. They weigh 45 tons. They're 130 feet long." Starting at 8:00pm Friday night, they will close all three regular northbound lanes on the connector that go to I-75 and funnel all of them into the HOV lane. Driver 1: "Man, that's gonna be bad. That's bad!" Driver 2: "Why are they shutting all three lanes down?" The reason is they have to put the crane somewhere to hoist all those beams, and the only place around is on the freeway itself. The DOT is trying to warn everyone to just stay away until 5am Monday morning. DOT Spokesperson: "We've put message signs up

all the way to Macon. And we're advising folks that if you're just passing through Atlanta, take 285 around to 75 or 85 cause we are expecting a lot of congestion.

Residents Fear Proposed Nightclub will Bring Excessive Traffic

Date: 08/12/09 6pm duration :34 Jovita Moore

Some midtown Atlanta residents are concerned about a nightclub's return to Peachtree Street. Neighbors shared their worries last night with owners of the new 'Vision' night club. They're concerned about noise and traffic. Neighbor Penelope Cherooff: "Everybody understands being a good neighbor is the most important part of that and considerate neighbors whether they are residential or Loews hotel commercial." Dwayne Martin, nightclub attorney: "Many of the things we're already working on security plans, traffic management, how our patrons will be queued into the location things we're currently working on.." The residents gave the club owners a list to consider as they move forward.

City Smog Levels Best in Six Years

Date: 08/08/09 8am duration :31 Linda Stouffer

It's a milestone summer for clean air in Atlanta ... in fact, this is the cleanest air since 2003. Friday, we were under our 12th smog alert of the year, but fortunately smog levels did *not* reach the code orange level. Experts say it could get worse – August is a high smog alert month. Kevin Green: "I don't think we can sit on our laurels and say we've made it through another smog season. We've got a long way to go. We've got almost 2 months to go in smog season yet." Experts encourage Atlantans to carpool, use public transportation, or telecommute to fight smog.

14th St Bridge Project Completed Ahead of Schedule

Date: 09/05/09 6am duration :33 Carol Sbarge

This morning the orange cones and barriers are gone and traffic is free to move along the 14th St bridge in midtown Atlanta. After a ribbon cutting ceremony Thursday, officials moved the barricades that surrounded the bridge over the last year. Now, the new \$88 million dollar bridge paves the way for businesses in the area to do well again. Charlotte Gill (Silver Skillet Restaurant) : "...a whole lot different cause we're busy now. I like it. I'm glad the bridge opened back up." Crews finished the bridge four months ahead of schedule. It has a new turning lane and is pedestrian friendly with wide and lighted sidewalks.

King Center Pedestrian Traffic Plan Proposed

Date: 10/04/09 12pm duration :20 Linda Stouffer

A proposal by an Atlanta City Council member could drastically change traffic flow around the King Center. Kwanza Hall wants to create a pedestrian-only area in front of the King Center to help improve safety for visitors. If the council approves the measure, the city would close Auburn Avenue to cars between Jackson Street and Boulevard.

Atlanta Loses Out on Federal Stimulus Money

Date: 09/28/09 6pm

duration :15

John Pruitt

Financial road rage! Metro Atlanta's traffic is getting worse, but our roads still are getting short-changed. Congress is making plans to spend tens of billions of dollars on transportation projects nationwide. But even before the flooding left some of our roads a mess, metro Atlanta got pushed to the curb when it comes to money from Washington.

Parking Woes at Veterans Hospital

Date: 07/22/09 5pm

duration :18

Jovita Moore

The Veterans Administration Medical Center in DeKalb County is treating a record number of patients. The crush of veterans getting care has led to nightmare traffic tie-ups and long waits for patients who just want to park! The VA says problems could continue for some time.

Speeding Crackdown

Date: 07/23/09 5pm

duration :19

Fred Blankenship

Metro Atlanta law enforcement agencies are teaming up to put the brakes on speeders. Today, traffic enforcement units are concentrating patrols on I-285, I-85, I-75 and I-20. They're looking for speeders and people violating "the move over law." It requires drivers to move over one lane for emergency vehicles on the side of the road.

Dunwoody Parents Voice Traffic Safety Concerns

Date: 08/09/09 11pm

duration :37

Lori Geary

Some metro Atlanta parents have a concern about the first day of school tomorrow. They say traffic will put some students in danger. The brand new Dunwoody Elementary school is one of six public schools in a 2 ½ square mile area. The school also sits next door to Georgia Perimeter College. Parents and city leaders say it creates traffic and safety problems. Kirstin Ralston-Coley (parent) : My neighbor right next door 16 year old son got hit by a car and if a 16 year old can get hit by a car then a 6 year old can get hit by a car and I have 2 6 year olds here. The Dunwoody city council says it is looking into putting a traffic light in front of Dunwoody Elementary to help the traffic flow.

Woodstock Road Rage Case

Date: 08/06/09 6pm

duration :32

Jovita Moore

A local man accused in a road rage attack in Woodstock is out of jail on bond. Jaron Reeves tells us a man was tailgating him last Thursday. According to a police report, Nicholas Petty says Reeves sped past him. That's when Reeves made an obscene gesture. Investigators say Petty hit Reeves' and his car with a crowbar while Petty's 18-month old child sat in the backseat. Jaron Reeves: "He just proceeded to keep beating me with a crowbar, screaming I'm going to kill you, I'm going to kill you." Petty told police he was out of control and that he felt bad about what happened.

Fulton County Chief Jailer Forced to ResignDate: **07/22/09 07:11:53** duration :36

Carol Sborge

The chief jailer for Fulton County was among those who stepped down. Riley Taylor came back to run the Fulton County jail after working as a deputy there for almost 30 years. He also served as the federally appointed court auditor, reporting on the jail's progress improving conditions. The judge who appointed Riley is *not* happy. "He served the court well and I relied very much on his advice and experience. I hate to see him leave." Sheriff Ted Jackson issued a statement: "Unfortunately they ran off the chief jailer with a policy that was not good government and this policy that was not good government and this policy discriminates against hard-working Fulton County retirees.

Judge Refuses to Keep Police Internal Documents SealedDate: **07/08/09 18:59:20** duration :38

Monica Pearson

Today a judge struck down a police union's request in a fight over documents. The union wanted the judge to block the release of police records to a citizens review board. Police already have handed over the information. The panel is reviewing the police shooting of 92-year-old Kathryn Johnston in 2006. Senator Vincent Fort told us today, it's important citizens feel confident in their police department. Fort: "Crime is a problem but if we're gonna face that issue of crime, the citizens have to trust the police department that serves them." The International Brotherhood of Police Officers tried to block the records. They said the release could undermine internal investigations.

Georgia Tech Neighbors Fighting Back Against Criminals

Date: 07/17/09 6am

duration :32

Fred Blankenship

Recent crime in the Georgia Tech area has pushed neighbors to say enough is enough! Homeowners, police and students gathered in the Home Park neighborhood last night to form a neighborhood watch. The Home Park area borders Georgia Tech. Police handed out information on their efforts to step up patrols in the area. City council members also encouraged neighbors to look out for each other. Nick Valencia: "There is a fear since of being afraid..here—we are serious about starting something." In addition to the neighborhood watch, police have assigned an officer to patrol the area.

Mayor, Police Chief Vow to Fight Crime Wave

Date: 07/30/09 11pm

duration :41

Monica Pearson

Atlanta's Mayor and Police Chief are vowing to combat a recent wave of crime. At police headquarters today, the two announced a crime-fighting plan that includes 139 more officers, gang sweeps and roadblocks. Police Chief Richard Pennington's appearance comes after criticism of him being out of town during some high profile crimes. Pennington: "One thing about being a police chief there's no city immune from crime. I don't care what day I pick to leave, there will be a crime..that happens every time I leave town." Franklin: "I think he's a great police chief. I think he's reformed this department." Chief Pennington says he was attending mandated police training. He added, crime in the city overall is down, but teen gang activity is up.

Gwinnett Public Safety Funds Discussed

Date: 07/21/09 5pm

duration 1:38

Manuel Bojorquez

Commissioners voted to save Gwinnett County Police Department's "Quality of Life" unit – that's 13 civilian positions – and set aside funding for a federal program that would begin deportations from the county jail, but plans to reduce from the county's five year budget remained. Chief Charles Walters: "It's 53 police cars that won't be occupied ... that's a big cut for any police department." As far as the rest of 2009 is concerned, Gwinnett County Police Chief Charles Walters says he still has to find ways to cut more than 50 positions. Walters: "I still don't have a clear picture. Nothing I heard today said anything about changing the 53 vacancies created by attrition." The fire department also stands to lose 50 positions by the end of 2009. Citizens voiced their concerns about any cuts to police and fire. Tracy Seymour: "I am disturbed to hear that the police force will not be receiving cost of living raises, no promotions, no shift changes – and reduction in force to 2003 levels." But commissioners point out that without additional revenue, including a proposed tax increase that residents vocally opposed. They have no choice but to adjust the five year plan which they also say is not set in stone, and some positions may come back if things change. Chairman Charles Bannister: "We'll revisit this again in the next few months, when we present the 2010 budget, and it's five year spending plan."

Crime Summits Held

Date: 08/08/09 6pm

duration 1:20

Darren Lyn

"We are in a crisis." Two hundred concerned community members attended this crime summit in southeast Atlanta. They say they're tired of the violence. Derrick Boazman, event organizer: "Atlanta is becoming a dangerous city. Atlanta is a scary city." Police Chief Richard Pennington: "We will continue to work extremely hard to keep our communities safe." Pennington addressed the crowd's concerns that violent crimes are on the rise. He says the numbers tell a different story. Pennington: "So far for the first 8 months in contrast to last year crime is down 10%, but it's hard to convince people that crime is down when they see one, two, three high profile crimes." The crime summit was broken down into different discussions including this one on gang prevention. Concerned citizen Eric Jenkins: "If we can reach out and prevent one from joining a gang that one that we reach can then reach another one." Pennington says 139 new officers will be on the streets by the end of the year. Residents say that's not enough. Organizers of this crime summit say protecting your community comes down to the basics, such as starting a neighborhood watch program to keep an eye on crime and just using your common sense – like don't go to an ATM machine at 2 or 3 in the morning.

Date: 09/14/09 11pm

duration 1:19

Darren Lyn

Several dozen residents voiced their concerns about crime at this town hall meeting in northwest Atlanta tonight. Patricia Hunter says recent high profile crimes such as the murder of boxer Vernon Forrest and the Spelman college student who was gunned down at Clark Atlanta University have her worried about the safety of her own family. Hunter: "They get into a confrontation or something, they shootin', stray bullet don't have anybody name on it, anybody could be killed. I don't want my grandchildren to grow up in this kind of environment." According to the latest numbers by the FBI, violent crime in Atlanta dropped more than 8% between 2007 and 2008 – from 8,075 cases to about 7,400. Deputy Chief Carlos Banda: "If something has to go down, you'd much rather have less homicides, less assaults, less robberies, less rapes." However, property crimes increased 7.6% between 2007 and 2008 to nearly 39,000 crimes. Banda emphasizes there's still a lot of work to be done. "Any crime is one crime too many, I mean that's the bottom line, if we have crime down 95-percent and your house gets hit, it's still a problem. Atlanta City Councilman Ivory Lee Young who organized tonight's meeting says educating the children is the best deterrent to crime. Young: "Early childhood education can't be a, a footnote, it's gotta be front and center, a priority."

Police Surveillance Cameras Considered for More Areas

Date: 08/23/09 5pm

duration 1:24

Jeff Dore

There are some people who fear the government is watching us too much, and others who fear it is not watching other people enough. For that group, the city wants to install more surveillance cameras like that one. There already are pockets of surveillance cameras in Atlanta. Both the cameras in midtown and the ones in Buckhead were paid for by local business coalitions. Now the city has applied for \$13 million dollars of federal stimulus money to install cameras and a monitoring station to fight crime. David Edwards, Sr Police Advisor: "which would place 400 cameras in the city in high crime areas." So defining high crime areas could be fairly broad. Edwards: "We think we could deploy about 400 cameras across 80 square miles of the city which is more than half the city." Atlanta's point man for getting stimulus grants says studies show cameras can reduce crime by 10 -25% and people we talked with like that. Lynn Farfield, midtown resident: "If it's gonna be used in terms of combating crime, that's awesome." But some expressed concerns. Lynn Barfield, midtown: "I have mixed feelings on it cause I know there's a lot of crime going on so it could be positive but at the same time I'm not sure if I like the idea of the police always seeing me. (laugh)" Of course once you put the cameras in, someone has to monitor them. That may

“Tea Party” CancelledDate: **07/02/09 11pm**

duration :37

John Pruitt

A 4th of July protest or “tea party” won’t be allowed to happen Saturday on a piece of property in Gwinnett County. Organizers say they got permission from the new owner of this property to hold the event. However, they say adjoining Gwinnett Place Mall recently axed the plans. Julieanne Thompson: “We were told that they did not want the event there ... because we were going to be protesting and they did not want political events on Simon Properties.” Last month the mall nixed the event by invoking a mutual parking agreement giving the mall a say on how it’s used. In a statement, Simon Mall says it’s their policy not to permit political rallies on mall property.

Date: **07/03/09 5am**

duration :17

Jovita Moore

A group planning a so-called tea party is crying foul this afternoon. They’ve had to cancel a tax protest planned for Independence Day. They had a location and permission from the property owner, but then a Gwinnett County mall got involved.

Fulton County Pension Board ControversyDate: **07/15/09 6pm**

duration :33

Monica Pearson

Fulton County employees no longer will be able to retire, collect pensions, but still come back to work for the county. Commissioners voted unanimously to end the practice, some claim amounts to “double dipping.” It goes away starting August 1st. Tom Lowe, Fulton County Commissioner: “The board of commissioners and your county manager expected 100 percent compliance immediately...not 30 days from now; four months from now; or 90 days from now!” Local and state governments nationwide are cracking down on double dippers. Supporters say rehiring retirees is a cost-effective way to tap experience.

Date: **07/21/09 6pm**

duration :24

Monica Pearson

Within the last hour, roughly 30 Fulton County police officers and deputies have resigned from their jobs. They were forced out by a pension policy that hadn’t been enforced in years. All of the officers were retirees who came back to work and were collecting both a paycheck and a pension check. Jodie Fleischer ...

Tax Court Controversy in GwinnettDate: **08/11/09 11pm**

duration :24

Justin Farmer

A hearing on a tax controversy in Gwinnett County is set for Monday. Late today, a judge ruled the tax rate for city residents and those who live in unincorporated areas should be the same. The county says city residents should have a higher rate because they pay some taxes to city governments *only* -- even though all residents get county services. The judge did not set a rate today. He wants county commissioners to weigh in.

Date: **08/12/09 5am**

duration :24

Carol Sborge

In a matter of days, a hearing is scheduled about a tax controversy in Gwinnett County. Tuesday a judge ruled the tax rate for city residents and those who live in unincorporated areas should be the same. The county says city residents should have a higher rate because they pay some taxes to city governments *only* -- even though all residents get county services. The judge did not set a rate.

Critics Charge Nepotism in Latest Judge Appointee

Date: **07/10/09 5pm**

duration 1:15

Richard Belcher

The vacancy was created when Justice Leah Ward Sears announced she was stepping down at the end of June. Filling the vacancy is the responsibility of the Governor, but the state uses a nominating commission to vet the candidates. July 1, the Governor's office sent out this press release, listing the nominees and quoting the Governor, "I appreciate the significant amount of time and effort the JNC members put into this process. But a day later, commission member Robert Reeves, a Superior Court Judge in southeast Georgia, wrote his fellow members -- when I saw this list, and saw the first name on the list, I again became concerned. The first name on the list is 39-year-old Stephen Louis Dillard, who practices law in Macon. We informed Dillard's office of the criticism, but he has not returned our call. About the process that put Dillard on the list of nominees, Judge Reeves wrote ... "the gatekeepers succumbed to pressure to submit the name of a candidate who is apparently the son of a political ally or member of the governor's staff. Based on our private discussion, I believe that not one of the members present felt that this candidate should be appointed to the highest court in our state." Mike Bowers: "The head of the nominating commission told me late today, there is vigorous debate over the nominees, but I didn't feel any pressure. I respect Judge Reeves but I disagree with him."

Fight Against Electronic "Touch Screen" Voting Machines

Date: **07/13/09 6pm**

duration :35

Monica Pearson

A citizen's group took its fight against Georgia's touch-screen voting machines all the way to the state supreme court today. Georgia switched to the system, after the "hanging chad" controversy during the 2000 presidential election. Critics told the court, there's no guarantee electronic ballots are counted correctly. Walker Chandler, lawyer: "We now live in some kind of brave new world where 'trust the government' is the watchword." It's something I think the Supreme Court of Georgia is not quite ready to adopt. Walker's group says Georgia needs a way to verify touch screen voting with a paper trail, and allow for a recount if needed.

Gilmer Residents Question Financing of New Courthouse Building

Date: **07/16/09 16:58:41** duration 1:33

Richard Belcher

Now this was the construction manager at risk ... as opposed to the straight bid that was utilized with the 'phase one' building." The \$20.5 million dollar courthouse complex in downtown Ellijay is done, but not without controversy. The new commission chairman recently wrote an open letter to Gilmer constituents in which he said the bills are paid and the project is closed. But he also acknowledged the confusion and suspicion that dogged 'phase two' of the project. Some of that he attributes to small town skepticism about government in general. You know, here in the country people, uh, people tend to criticize [or] criticize government a little bit more. They want more freedoms a little bit more closer to our philosophies in the rural areas, I believe." When we reported on the project last fall, the Gilmer County community was divided. Dark speculation about cost overruns and favoritism were easy to find. Part of that may have been fed by one of Chastain's political opponents who said he didn't favor an open public debate about the project and its cost -- even in an election year. Chastain opposed that approach then. And now... Chairman: "It would, be pure suicide to try to take that approach today." The courthouse done,

Chairman Chastain turned his attention to the \$6 million dollar proposal for a new jail and sheriff's office. The numbers have now changed. Chairman: "You know the current estimate is around \$1.5 million for virtually the same function that we were going to be getting out of that six.

Fulton Property Taxes

Date: **09/30/09 6pm** duration :37 Jovita Moore

The tax commissioner today addressed allegations he was *withholding* the bills as leverage in an effort to convince county leaders to give him and top staffers more than \$200,000 in raises. Arthur Ferdinand admitted he brought up the issue of raises while he and the county manager were talking about the late bills. But Ferdinand says it's common for them to discuss more than one issue at a time. He says he never tried to link the two issues. The tax commissioner says the county has agreed to pay him a higher salary, but only because it's dictated by state law. His staffers have *not* received raises.

Date: **09/16/09 6pm** duration :24 Justin Farmer

A disturbing revelation for Fulton County commissioners late this afternoon. They've been waiting weeks for the tax commissioner to mail property tax bills, and collect money the county needs to operate. Now they've learned he's using conversations about the delay, to lobby for raises for himself and his staff. Jodie Fleischer ...

Date: **10/03/09 6pm** duration :37 Linda Stouffer

More details on the tax bill controversy. The tax commissioner addressed allegations he was *withholding* the bills as leverage in an effort to convince county leaders to give him and top staffers – more than \$200,000 dollar raises. Arthur Ferdinand admitted he brought up the issue of raises while he and the County Manager were talking about the late bills. But Ferdinand says it's common for them to discuss more than one issue at a time. He says he never tried to link the two issues. The tax commissioner says the county has agreed to pay him a higher salary, but only because it's dictated by state law. His staffers have *not* received raises.

Scientologist Church Zoning Issue in Sandy Springs

Date: **09/18/09 5pm** duration :35 Justin Farmer

Attorneys for the Church of Scientology sill plan to go ahead with their request to expand a building in Sandy Springs. Last night the city's planning commission denied the church's rezoning application for the expansion. Opponents are worried an expansion would cause traffic problems. "The use is entirely too intense for that building - I mean, they bought an office building and they say, we're going to make it into a church -and it's not meant to be a church." Scientology spokesman: "All we want is to be treated the same as other churches in the history of the county and city government." The full City Council takes up the issue next month.