

TELEVISION STATION WSB-TV / ATLANTA

**QUARTERLY LISTING OF LOCAL PROGRAMS REFLECTING CONCERNS AND/OR NEEDS OF THE
COMMUNITY**

APRIL 1, 2008 – JUNE 30, 2008

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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 second quarter, 2008)

QUARTERLY ISSUES / PROGRAMS LIST

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

Atlanta Public Schools Propose Redistricting Plan

Date: **04/14/08 6pm** duration :19 Monica Pearson

For parents hoping to stop a student shuffle between several metro Atlanta elementary schools, it's a case of "speak now or never." Tonight's the night the school board is scheduled to make the decision on redistricting. A last public comment period is happening right now. John Bachman ...

Date: **04/14/08 5pm** duration :53 John Bachman

Marsha Sims, parent: "We really wanted to make sure that we bought close to the elementary school which is why we purchased a home we considered close to Morris Brandon and we thought that way it might secure us from being redistricted." But growth in the northwest Atlanta area is creating crowded classrooms, so the Atlanta Public School board is looking at shuffling elementary students between Morris Brandon and Jackson. The district is proposing to take kids from Jackson – who live west of I-75, south of Nancy Creek, and down to Collier – and move them to Brandon. Brandon kids who live between Northside Parkway, Arden Road, and West Paces Ferry would move to Jackson. John Patrick, Real Estate Agent: "It is a concern. People want value in their homes, and schools drive value." Patrick is a real estate agent who also lives in the area.

Date: **04/15/08 7am** duration :37 Carol Sbarge

The Atlanta Public School Board approved a plan to send hundreds of elementary students to different schools. Beginning with the 2009 school year, children from Brandon, Jackson, and Sarah Smith elementary schools would attend primary centers. The primary centers can accommodate kindergarten through second grade. Not everyone is happy with the plan. Brian LeMaster, parent: "I'm concerned with, if you approve this, if it could stand a legal challenge." Nancy Patterson, parent: "We are fortunate to have three wonderful schools involved in this situation and so we don't feel like any of these schools are coming out on the losing end." The district says increased population in the area forced them to come up with a plan to move 365 students.

Date: **05/09/08 12pm** duration :36 Pam Martin

Some Atlanta parents are fighting back after hearing their kids' high-performing middle school could be closing. Atlanta Public School officials say they want to close Walden Middle School because of declining enrollment. But parents say they were just told and that their children may now be forced to go to a much larger school with lower test scores. Parent: "and we are taxpaying citizens just like everyone else and we want the same opportunities and same rights that are given to everybody and every other community." School officials will hold two public hearings on the proposal. Then the school board must vote on the plan.

Date: **05/09/08 7am** duration :45 Amanda Rosseter

Parents aren't just upset that the school might close, they are upset that they just found out about it. Walden Middle School is an Atlanta Public School. With what parents call high performing students. But declining enrollment has a proposal on the table to close the school and send the students to King Middle --- which is almost triple the size with lower scores. The district says the closing info has been on the website for weeks – but parents say they are just finding out. They say they should have been part of a process sooner. This isn't a done deal quite yet. The school board has to vote on it, and parents will get their say at a public hearing.

DeKalb Parents Question School Officials

Date: **04/15/08 6pm** duration :21 Amanda Rosseter

Some DeKalb County parents say they will go to a school redistricting meeting tonight to find out why Vanderlyn Elementary is losing its principal. A spokesman for DeKalb Schools says it needs Principal Charlene Burger at another school. Some Vanderlyn parents say that's not fair. They protested at the school today. Burger wrote a letter, saying she supports any decision school officials make.

Judge Marvin Arrington Speaks Out on African American Youth

Date: **04/03/08 5pm** duration :16 Jovita Moore

Fulton County Judge Marvin Arrington says he never meant to stir controversy by asking white people to leave his courtroom! As Channel 2 was first to report, it happened last week during a calendar call. Today, Arrington delivered another courtroom message.

Date: **04/24/08 6pm** duration :29 Monica Pearson

Tonight the Fulton County Judge who created a courtroom controversy is teaming up with a popular comedian! Judge Marvin Arrington and Bill Cosby are hosting a private "fireside chat" tonight for at-risk youth. Cosby is also known for his outspoken views on how to curb violence in the black community.

Clayton County Schools Accreditation Crisis

Date: **04/16/08 5am** duration :38 Fred Blankenship

Clayton County's interim superintendent is trying to reassure parents that the school district will *not* lose its accreditation. We were there when parents packed last night's school board meeting. Some called on the entire board to resign. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has recommended the district lose accreditation in September ... unless the board makes changes in nine areas. The board did not act to reinstate Noreese Haynes. They declared his seat vacant over concerns that he lived outside the district. A state investigation has since proven otherwise.

Date: **04/20/08 7am** duration :30 Amanda Rosseter

In Clayton County, parents are considering going door-to-door with recall information so they can oust their school board. Saturday, parents gathered in the gymnasium at Mt. Zion High School for a town hall meeting. It lasted 2 ½ hours. SACS has outlined nine mandates the school system must meet or the county will lose accreditation September 1. Parents could not collect signatures for a recall petition at the meeting because it was on school property.

Date: **04/28/08 5pm** duration 1:20 Tom Jones

It's the first day on the job for new Clayton County schools Corrective Superintendent Dr. John Thompson. He's visiting schools talking to students, and teachers. Thompson was greeted with smiles and warm handshakes. It may be surprising because of the controversy surrounding Thompson's hiring. This is what happened at a meeting where board members voted on Thompson's contract. Thompson says he's not concerned with any controversy for dissension on the board. HE says his sole focus is on giving kids a world class education. Thompson: "We're gonna do what's best for these children." He's getting paid \$285,000 dollars a year to do that. And his contract states he doesn't have to live in the county. Thompson: "Let me explain something to you. The people in Clayton

County are paying my salary. I'm not going to spend my money in another county. I'm gonna live in Clayton County."

Date: **06/14/08 5pm** duration :30 Jaquitta Williams

Today, hundreds of parents gave Clayton County educators an earful over the on-going accreditation issue. At Lovejoy High School, new superintendent John Thompson spoke to parents about the steps the district is taking to avoid losing accreditation. These sessions are designed to keep parents up what the system is doing. "we've been here before so I won't so I'm satisfied..we haven't met all nine requirements but the majority have." Doctor Thompson says more sessions are coming this summer. The deadline for Clayton County Schools to fix it's problems is September 1.

Date: **06/28/08 11pm** duration :22 Lori Geary

Clayton County's top educator says the district has completed 90% of the work needed to keep its accreditation. Superintendent John Thompson says the system could meet the requirement by July 15. Dr. Thompson made the claims at a third informational session today at Sequoyah Middle School in Riverdale. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has given the district until September 1 to meet nine mandates.

Diploma Controversy in Clayton County

Date: **06/05/08 5am** duration :27 Carol Sbarge

More fallout from the diploma controversy in Clayton County. A state watchdog group is now accusing the new school superintendant of misusing public funds! Last weekend 3,000 students graduated without diplomas. Superintendant John Thompson wanted them thrown out because they had the former superintendant's name. The Ethics in Government Group has filed a formal complaint over the printing costs. The printer waived the cost of the new diplomas, but the district has to spend \$1,300 dollars to mail them.

Georgia CRCT: Alarming Failure Rates

Date: **05/16/08 11pm** duration 1:15 Darryn Moore

Eighth grader Amanda Miller is prepping for the Renaissance Middle School dance. But her CRCT math scores may have Amanda prepping for summer school. It shows in her school work. She's an A/B honor student, scores high in math ... and she's one of many at Renaissance Middle who failed the state's mandatory test. Parent: "I find the statistics to be astronomical. It's almost 80% of the students." A spokesperson for the Fulton County school system told Channel 2 over the telephone ... they're seeing a large number of low scores in math. We're told the state changed its math curriculum and many students are not catching on. Which means 3rd, 5th, and 8th graders will have to pass the test to move on. Although Amanda is dressed to impress and ready for an evening of group pictures, Amanda's mom is looking for a group of parents to help get to the bottom of some failing test scores. Mom: "I'm looking for parents if I have to stand alone ... it's just that important to me."

Date: **05/19/08 12pm** duration :25 Fred Blankenship

Parents at one Fulton County Middle School want answers. And today they will meet with the state school superintendant to try and get them. Nearly 80% of the 8th grade students at Renaissance Middle School filed standardized math tests. Now they must go to summer school to pass 8th grade. Some parents blame the teachers. But a school spokesperson says many students have just not caught on to the new state math curriculum.

Date: **05/27/08 5pm**

duration 1:25

Manuel Bojorquez

Forty percent of Georgia 8th graders did not pass the CRCT math aptitude test ... so school districts expect to see a large number of them in summer school. Sloan Roach: "We're probably still going to need to hire some additional teachers ... we know that and we are working toward that." Sloan Roach, spokeswoman for Gwinnett County schools says they are confident they can accommodate more students. State Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox promised \$1.4 million dollars will be distributed across state systems to offset costs. Roach: We have not heard in Gwinnett what our portion of that might be ... however last year, we spent \$4.9 million dollars for summer school for elementary and middle schools alone in Gwinnett, so any additional funding would be helpful." And it's difficult to know how many students will enroll for summer sessions ... it is not mandatory in some districts, others may seek private tutors. IN Fulton County, a group called Georgia Parents for Math question whether summer school would even help. They believe the state's new curriculum is flawed, since even students with good grades did not pass. Heather Bumstead: "I think the parents are worried that their kids will go to summer school and be exposed to the same material that didn't benefit them the first time." Tammy Lucas: "So hopefully, they don't waste another month of their time and we'll just have to see. IT's hard to believe that you can remediate in one month and make up for the kind of losses those students have incurred."

Date: **06/05/08 11pm**

duration :36

John Pruitt

Some local parents, whose children have to go to summer school, are upset the school system is *not* providing transportation. Parent Charisse Brown: "I want my daughter to be able to go to the 9th grade next year instead of being retained because I can't get her back and forth." Parents say Gwinnett County needs to take responsibility for the students not passing the CRCT and provide buses for summer school. Gwinnett says it would cost too much money. Parents say it's going to cost them gas and time away from work. Gwinnett summer school starts June 26. Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb and Fulton County schools all provide transportation during summer school.

Date: **06/12/08 11pm**

duration :22

Eric Phillips

A Henry County mother is frustrated tonight. She says school officials ignored her request to keep her daughter in the fifth grade, even though she is performing at a third grade level. School officials were reluctant because the student was held back once before. The situation came to a head when the student failed the CRCT

Date: **06/23/08 6pm**

duration :24

John Pruitt

Now's your chance to speak out about the state's controversial Criterion Referenced Competency Test, or CRCT. Georgia's Department of Education is collecting public comments on recommended changes to the test. Thousands of students failed the exam this year. Officials threw out sixth and seventh grade social studies results after 70-80% of those students failed.

Atlanta Parents "Camp Out" for Pre-K Spots

Date: **04/30/08 5pm**

duration :38

Jovita Moore

For some parents, it's been a long week as they've camped out for days to get their kids into a Pre-K program. The parents want their kids to be one of 20 accepted at Mary Lin Elementary in northeast Atlanta. Registration is Thursday. But some parents – like Jaye Crawford – showed up *Monday* to wait. She is 30th in line. Crawford: "it would be very nice to be able to walk summer to school or pick summer up from school." An Atlanta Public School's spokesperson says they don't recognize the line. They tell us the first 20 people through the doors who get their names on the list will get in the Pre-K

Date: **05/01/08 6am**

duration :40

Fred Blankenship

We're following new developments overnight in a pre-k campout in northeast Atlanta. The R-V's and tents are gone this morning at Mary Lin elementary. Police and school officials asked parents to move them from the neighborhood because of complaints. The parents also say APS officials told them they may not honor their unofficial line-up that started earlier this week. The only information we got from them was that at 6:30 in the morning they were going to throw open the gates and everybody here was going to basically have to run for it and we'd fight our way in." The school district had asked the parents not to form lines until after district testing ended earlier this week. However some did anyway.

Date: **05/02/08 5am**

duration :38

Carol Sbarge

Some local parents are furious this morning and the Atlanta School system is now re-evaluation how children are put in Pre-K classes. Several parents camped out along Candler Park Drive, trying to get their children one of 20 spots in Mary Lin elementary. After much anticipation for decision day, they were told, the line they were in was not official. The new lines formed Thursday led to friction. Mark Clement: "I don't think I'd ever do this again. This is disgraceful the way the city has handled this. If they set up the rules they need to stick to it." Some parents say Atlanta Schools need to use a lottery, like other school systems.

DeKalb Mother Jailed for "Educational Neglect"

Date: **05/21/08 11pm**

duration :34

Tom Jones

Police arrested a DeKalb County mother again this afternoon for allowing her four children to miss more than *320* days of school! Sonia Bloodsaw is just one of thousands of parents authorities have charged with educational neglect. She claims she was home-schooling her kids, but there's a problem with that. Bloodsaw: "I didn't qualify cause I didn't graduate from high school myself. Reporter: "That makes sense, doesn't it?" Bloodsaw: "No it doesn't make sense." After her last arrest, Bloodsaw spent 35 days in jail. DeKalb's Solicitor General says educational neglect is a growing problem. Last year, authorities investigated 15,000 DeKalb students who missed 10 days or more.

Perdue Signs Two Health Care Measures Into LawDate: **05/08/08 6am**

duration :31

Fred Blankenship

Two bills aimed at making health insurance more accessible to Georgians are signed into law this morning. Gov Perdue: "There are no simple solutions but we'll take it a step at a time.. and folks this is a great step forward." The Governor signed the measures Wednesday. One of the bills eliminates the companies state and local premium taxes on high deductible plans. It's expected to save \$146 million dollars over five years. Another helps with the creation of the health savings accounts. Critics say the programs are too expensive for most of the uninsured.

Report Card on Healthcare for Georgia MinoritiesDate: **04/20/08 9am**

duration :40

Amanda Rosseter

A new report points out the best and worst Georgia counties for minority health and healthcare. Several counties in our area – including Gwinnett, Cherokee, and Forsyth – made the "best" list. State agencies took a look at the health of minorities in Georgia and their access to care. On the other side, the report shows Fulton, Hall, Jackson, and Clarke Counties are among 16 that pose the greatest health challenges for minorities. Rhonda Meadows: "there are some counties where they've had some successes which are pleasant surprises, but there are some counties that we should say are target rich with opportunities to improve." The people behind the report hope it inspires the counties that are lagging behind to take action.

Electronic Medical Records System UnveiledDate: **06/12/08 12pm**

duration :20

Fred Blankenship

A major announcement this morning that affects the medical records for thousands of Georgians. Health and Human Services director Mike Leavitt joined Governor Sonny Perdue to unveil a demonstration project being conducted in our state. It offers incentives for physicians to use electronic health records for Medicare patients. Georgia is one of twelve sites that will participate in the program.

Georgia's Trauma Care CentersDate: **06/03/08 12pm**

duration :34

Carol Sbarge

They're talking trauma today at Georgia State University. And some say the news is dire. Dr. Art Kellermann: "We have today in Georgia areas of the state like metro Atlanta that are already right at the brink. We are maxed out in terms of capacity and we're struggling on any given night to get the next trauma patient a bed." Dr. Kellerman is with Emory University, but practices at Grady Hospital. It is the only "Level One" trauma center in metro Atlanta. Kellerman and others at a conference today are pushing a bill to overhaul the state trauma network, to bring critical care to many more Georgians.

Date: **06/09/08 5pm**

duration 1:15

Diana Davis

Grady is the largest of four "Level One" trauma centers in Georgia. The trauma care network commission gave Grady \$12.7 million dollars. Grady had hoped for more. State Senator Vincent Fort: "We were very sure that the funding would be in the \$20-\$25 million dollar range. When I heard that it was only \$12 million I really – to be honest with you – was stunned." Grady got 26% of the money. The next biggest amount – \$5.6 million – went to Memorial Health University Medical Center in Savannah. About 5 million went to the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta. The Medical College of Central Georgia in Macon got \$3.5 million. Dr. Leon Haley: "That actually reflects very well with the amount of care Grady provides in the trauma care in the state." Emergency medicine specialists agree the money is a shot in the arm for Grady and other trauma hospitals in the state, but only a beginning. The rest is up to the legislature. Dr. Kellerman: "This is life sustaining money to keep the current system from falling apart that sits one year we're done. The state legislature has to come back in January; has to fund a long term mechanism for trauma care in this state; has to bring Georgia into the 21st century in terms of trauma care".

Controversy in Morrow “House Flipping” CaseDate: **04/25/08 13:29:46**

duration :42

Pam Martin

Some Morrow city leaders are defending their decision to buy houses to “flip.” A viewer called Channel 2 with questions about this house! The city manager told us they paid \$165,000 dollars for the house, and spent \$100,000 dollars more. He says they needed some of the property for a new trail. And John Lampl insists the purchase was not intended to improve the street where he and two city council members live. Lampl: In terms of what that easement would have cost us had we not been able to purchase that house, it would have been far greater in terms of cost." The city also owns a second home. We're told both are now being rented to city workers until the market improves.

More Employed Citizens Now Using Food BanksDate: **04/12/08 05:21:05**

duration 1:23

Manuel Bojorquez

More than 800 non-profit groups across north Georgia pick up donated items from the Atlanta community Food Bank to help those in need ... they've noticed a trend. Bill Bolling: “Almost half of the people coming in have a full time job – sometimes two jobs – to try to make ends meet.” Andono Bryant's household has three jobs. Bryant: “I'm working one job, my husband works two jobs. We have children in college. It's still extremely hard to make it meet.” Straight from her job as a cashier in Buckhead, she travelled to the Georgia Avenue Food Cooperative in southeast Atlanta for a box of groceries. She receives one, twice a month. What's eating away at the money they bring in? The economy, says Andono. Bolling: “It's almost like a perfect storm for those on fixed incomes and those with low wages.” Bill Bolling is founder and executive director of the Atlanta Community Food Bank. In 28 years, he says, he cannot remember so many working people in need – the mortgage crunch and gas prices, he says, are key factors. Bolling: “With the price of gas going up over a dollar a gallon, you really have a choice of buying groceries or putting gas in your car to get to work.” Mrs. Bryant says it's a decision made a bit easier, by the kindness of others. Andono Bryant: “This box we get twice a month ... it's more than a blessing.”

Georgia Unemployment RatesDate: **04/17/08 18:19:03**

duration :17

John Pruitt

The number of people without a job in Georgia is holding steady. New figures from the Georgia Department of Labor show the state's unemployment rate was 5.3% in March. It was the same in February. But the rate is still higher than the national average of 5.2%.

Date: **06/18/08 16:16:41**

duration 1:28

Carol Sbarge

Last month, Jamie Bell – like so many in Georgia – got laid off. She worked in administration at an IT Support company. Bell: “It was basically stated that due to the economy a lot of people were getting laid off and in order to keep the company up and running they needed to do what they needed to do.” A record number of Georgians are now unemployed. The May unemployment rate is at 5.8%. Michael Thurmond: “For Georgians who are unemployed, they're finding it even more difficult to find work. They're having to really work harder and longer to find jobs that are available.” State Labor Commissioner Thurmond says construction and housing related industries like carpeting have been especially hard hit in Georgia. He says jobs are also being cut in an area once considered strong. Surprisingly, retail – which suggests that consumers are ratcheting back on their purchases. Sherry Williams has been looking for an administrative assistant job since losing hers in September. Williams: “I think the longest I've been out of

work is four months. This is really blowing my mind.” In May, Georgia gained just 9400 payroll jobs. Many more were lost. When you have this ‘perfect storm’ the credit cards, the housing crisis, increasing gas prices ... all of those are contributing to a very different job market.

Bankruptcy Office Has to Expand

Date: **04/30/08 17:04:56** duration 1:230 Manuel Bojorquez

Georgia’s self-proclaimed largest filer of bankruptcy cases is getting – well – larger. Attorney: “We’ve had to double the room in our waiting area, just to accommodate the people.” In that expanded lobby, we met Patricia Richardson, who today filed to restructure her mounting debt, Chapter 13 bankruptcy. Richardson: “Somehow or the other ... all the other things life has thrown at you ... gas, interest rates, mortgages, etc ... I wasn’t able to keep up.” She’s trying to save the house she’s living in, but knows she’ll lose another home, an investment property. Richardson: “There must be six or seven foreclosed homes on that street, but we’re attempting to sell it. Now we’re going to end up being house #7, I guess.” Attorney: “Our numbers are higher than they’ve ever been.” Attorney Richard Thompson showed us the growing number of filings in her office, the busier than ever staff In Georgia’s northern district, bankruptcy filings are up 17% over this time last year. Attorney: “They’re worried about their children. They’re worried about their families. They’re worried about making ends meet.” They’re worried about holding on to what they have. Richardson: “I don’t have a problem boosting the economy, but I have to boost my program at home first.”

Protest Against Monthly Foreclosure Auctions

Date: **05/06/08 18:01:22** duration 1:20 Manuel Bojorquez

While a record number of foreclosed properties went up for auction on the steps of the Fulton County Courthouse, protestors fought to be heard. Reverend Cobble: “This must stop. This is a sin. The great sin of Georgia allowed this to happen, month after month, the first Tuesday of the month.” That is – by Georgia law – the day homes where the owners could no longer make the payments are sold to the highest bidder – one auction, heating up. And critics are still fighting against it. They believe people are being squeezed out of their homes after falling prey to subprime loans and a bad economy. Leroy Tyler: “There’s greed and there’s ignorance, and you put those two together and you have people who are victimized.” But investors don’t necessarily see it that way. Investor: “It’s unfortunate people lose their homes, but we don’t prey on them. We simply buy what’s for sale. They had the opportunity to buy homes, and they were unable to make the payments. It’s pretty simple.” With the bids going up, some call for change. Leroy Tyler: “So there has to be a process to stop this now, before it gets to the point that you can’t solve it. For someone, it’s too late.

Consumer Advisor Weighs In on Economic Crisis

Date: **04/29/08 18:06:06** duration :24 Jovita Moore

Today’s headlines make it hard to believe any of us can save money right now. Housing prices are down almost 13% from a year ago! But foreclosure rates continue to climb here in Georgia and across the country. And gas prices – we’re paying more in metro Atlanta than the national average! Consumer Advisor Clark Howard: “We see The Feds keep cutting interest rates, so why aren’t mortgage rates going down? For people with those adjustable mortgages who should refinance ... people with 3 years still fixed? 2 years? What’s the cutoff?”

Economic Concerns Hit Georgia State Patrol

Date: **04/29/08 11pm**

duration :20

John Pruitt

Our bad economy and high gas prices are even affecting the Georgia State patrol. The GSP wants to cut use by 25% to save money and gas, and that means less driving. The State Patrol says we'll be seeing more troopers parked, checking for speeders ... and fewer actual patrols driving on the road. There also will be more sobriety and license checkpoints.

Area Restaurants See Drop in Business

Date: **04/30/08 5pm**

duration 1:31

Carol Sbarge

Produce, milk, meat. Some wholesale food prices are at their highest levels in three decades. Cutting into the bottom line of restaurants just as the troubled economy has people eating out less. Rachel Sanford: "I think they're spending their money on bills and mortgages that are going up as well versus coming out to eat and have some beer." Rock Bottom Brewery restaurant, like many mid-range restaurants in metro Atlanta are seeing a drop in business. Less money coming in, coupled with soaring wholesale food prices, is leading to a drop in restaurant employment. As we have turnover, we just hire less people to replace them and maybe cut back some hours in the kitchen. The National Restaurant Association just released its index of restaurant activity for the month of March. It fell sharply and is now at it's lowest level on record. The Georgia Restaurant Association says some metro restaurants have gone out of business. Others are seeing profits drop but for most raising prices isn't an option. Ron Wolf: "For us, raising menu prices is a very painful and a very cautious process. We have great competition. We know that our customers are price sensitive. We know at the very time they're hurting, raising our prices is almost counter-productive." Restaurants are being very careful about the amount of food they order. Others are substituting some ingredients. Trying to find a balance so they maintain quality to maintain what customers they can.

Spike in Pawn Shop Traffic

Date: **05/09/08 6pm**

duration 1:21

Tom Regan

Chris Ritchie: "We normally don't see these kinds of things come into a pawn shop". He is talking about a \$2,300 Sony laptop that a businessman pawned and never came back to retrieve. Hard evidence of the floundering economy is filling the shelves in pawnshops across metro Atlanta. Ritchie: "What I am seeing is a lot of higher end customers like people who have better jobs, pawning very nice items. High end video cameras, high end laptops. These are business people individual, not our usual clientele." David Adelman, National Pawnbrokers Association: "We're seeing an increase, in not just low income, we're seeing across the board customers who need short term money, they won't get from the bank or anywhere else." Kathy Kennedy came in to pawn a pendant she owned to help her get to and from work. Kennedy: "I'm pawning something so I can pay for gas." Like many long distance commuters in metro Atlanta, Kathy is seeing her paycheck evaporate like the fumes at the pump. Kennedy: "For one week, I pay two hundred dollars for gas from McDonough to Atlanta where I work. Pawn shops are a good barometer of the state of the economy, and the signs they're seeing are not good. Ritchie: "Our regular customers who pawn are not coming back to pick up their stuff, cause they can't afford it".

WSB-TV Local News of Public Interest: Environment/Conservation

Older Homes Vulnerable to New City-Installed Meters

Date: **06/05/08 5am** duration :42 Carol Sbarge

This morning some Atlanta homeowners are worried about water leaks from new water meters. The city is installing 150,000 new meters. They're locked to prevent tampering. But owners of some older homes – without emergency shutoff valves – worry that there will be no way to turn off the water at the curb in case of emergency. Todd Dickey: "Now I can't come out to the street [and]turnoff the water if I have a problem, say if I break a water line. Water lines tend to break. So this is a huge problem for me and most people." The city says modern building codes require shut-off valves. Plumbers say owners of older houses that don't have those valves can install them for between \$300-\$500 dollars.

Georgia's Air Quality

Date: **04/30/08 11pm** duration :37 Monica Pearson

A sluggish economy and high gas prices are doing Georgia's air quality a favor. The states Clean Air campaign says a record number of drivers are signing up to carpool, ride bikes and use public transportation. Helping the environment is one incentive. Every mile driven causes up to one pound of pollution! But the campaign also gives cash, gas cards and gift cards as a reward. Not to mention saving you gas money and parking fees. Some people do not have to use transportation at all. The telecommute from home.

Date: **06/24/08 5pm** duration :31 John Pruitt

Metro doctors are preparing for an "increase" in smog-related complaints. The dirty air can be especially tough on young children and the elderly. Those with asthma or allergies usually feel the symptoms first. But metro Atlanta's air pollution can make anyone feel sick. Dr. Daniel Saade: "... causes our throat to get a little swollen and scratchy. It's a reaction to the toxins in the environment. We also swallow that stuff and it gets into our stomachs. [That] gives us that queasy feeling that you get". Dr. Saade says smog can also cause bronchitis, ear infections, and sinusitis.

Date: **06/27/08 6pm** duration :20 Richard Belcher

If June is any indication, this could be a smoggy summer across metro Atlanta. Hot, humid weather has produced at least 12 days in which air quality was unsafe, according to federal standards. Two of those days put air quality in the red zone. That means the air was unhealthy for most people. Ozone levels usually peak from 2:00pm to 7:00pm.

Atlanta's Water Crisis

Date: **04/15/08 6pm** duration :21 John Pruitt

Today the federal government is proposing a new water sharing plan for Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. The US Army Corps of Engineers' plan would cover the Appalachian/Chattahoochee / Flint River basin, including the Woodruff Dam. The plan would allow upstream lakes in Georgia to retain more water during a drought. We could also store more in Georgia during rainy conditions. The tri-state negotiations broke down last February.

Date: **05/06/08 6pm**

duration :26

John Pruitt

As Jeff pointed out, we're at a Level 4 Response Level, but that doesn't mean we're in a Level 4 drought any longer. This map shows how Georgia's water crisis is changing. The dark orange color stretching across Georgia is the area currently under Level 3 drought ... that's about 15% of the state. At the start of the year, 50% of Georgia was classified as Level 3 or higher. More than 1/3 of Georgia is out of the drought.

Date: **05/06/08 5pm**

duration :20

Jeff Dore

After a long meeting up on the 12th floor, here's what it means ... most of you who can see this TV station are still in the "Level 4" drought areas. Whatever restrictions and exemptions you had yesterday you will have tomorrow. A few counties got bumped to Level 2 ... they're in better shape. But take a look at our live picture from Chopper 2 at Lake Lanier. Those of us who get our water there are in worse shape than ever before for this time of year ... and one a representative of our region blasted the United States Army Corps of Engineers for that.

Date: **06/04/08 6am**

duration :21

Fred Blankenship

Georgia's drought could get worse before it gets better! That's the warning from state climatologist David Stooksbury. He says June and July are critical – as high temperatures come in – without major rain, the soil will get drier and streams and reservoirs will continue to fall. Right now, rainfall across much of south Georgia is below normal and so are soil moistures around the state.

Date: **06/26/08 5pm**

duration 1:25

Jim Strickland

Well, if you've got four toilets in a home and you've got a lot of people using them, after a while that adds up. So Tamara Hurst decided to trash her old toilets ... see under the USA ... that 78 means 1978. Hurst: "You're going from 3.5 gallons to 1.6 gallons." Officials figure switching out [the toilet] cuts water use in half – after you get a \$50.00 rebate per toilet. Luckily, Hurst gets her water from DeKalb County, where they pay cash. Atlantans are still waiting. Official: "We have not processed any rebates". Janet Ward of Atlanta Watershed Management says paying people to get rid of old toilets in the city has been a struggle. The city's financial software and the Department's billing software don't speak the same language. New toilets in Atlanta earn credits, not cash. Also, less than 1% of the eligible homes have even applied. Ward: "We've done everything we know how to do to teach people that these rebates are available. Maybe this will help. We need people to apply for these rebates." Even at \$900 bucks installed ... it's about more than the rebate. Over time you're going to reap the benefits of saving water, helping the environment, and they flush a lot better.

Atlanta Ranks as Nation's 10th Most Congested AreaDate: **06/17/08 6pm**

duration :22

Monica Pearson

More details now on the metro area's traffic trouble. A new study by Inrix ranks Atlanta's congestion the 10th worst in the nation. That's better than a recent Forbes report that put Atlanta at the top of its list. Inrix based its ranking on GPS data from thousands of cars. It also found drivers are easing up on major highways, but didn't look at traffic on surface streets.

Rail Legislation Looks to Reduce Car TrafficDate: **07/01/08 6pm**

duration :24

Monica Pearson

Congress is considering legislation today that could cut traffic on metro Atlanta roads by putting it on the rails. The bill would give railroad companies a 25% tax credit to increase capacity. A new study shows if 25% of truck cargo was shipped to the rails, the average Atlanta commuter would spend 61 less hours a year in their cars by 2006. It would also save them more than \$1,500 dollars in fuel costs.

Marta Unveils Long Term PlanDate: **04/30/08 12pm**

duration :18

Fred Blankenship

People looking to save money on gas turned out last night to hear more about Atlanta's big transportation plan. Officials held an open house to talk about the 30 year transit plan. Among other things, it includes expanding the MARTA rail and more extensive bus service. The goal is to reduce traffic congestion across metro Atlanta.

Clean Air Campaign Inspires Drivers to Find Alternate TransportationDate: **05/04/08 6pm**

duration 1:27

Richard Belcher

Kelly Sawyer may look a little over-dressed to be riding her bike through downtown Atlanta. But she's actually heading to her job as an office manager. She gave up driving two weeks ago. Sawyer: "Gas prices definitely did it and I'm very glad I started now because it seems like gas is rising every week." And she's saving about \$40 dollars a week. Not to mention the hassles of traffic and parking. "If you think about all that money I could save in a whole year that could be put to a lot better use." And she's even making money on the deal. Georgia's Clean Air campaign pays her \$3.00 a day up to \$180. More than 1,200 commuters have enrolled this year alone. "When people look into alternatives such as transit, telework or even carpooling, we're taking cars off the roads" When commuters make the switch, it saves even more. Phyllis Scofield now drives to MARTA and rides to work. "This is incredible, i can't believe in the last week went from 40 dollars to 56 dollars to fill up my car a week." Karen Karabinos spends more than \$80 dollars to fill her Suburban. Karabinos: "I'm working from home today." The attorney only drives the 70 mile round trip to midtown on Mondays, or for depositions and trials. "It's not fun in Atlanta traffic, and with rising costs it creates a real hardship these days."

Ramp Meters Installed at Interstate On Ramps

Date: **06/16/08 5am**

duration 1:16

Fred Blankenship

Beginning Monday, these machines will give Atlantans an adult driving exercise as simple as the favorite childhood game ... it's red light, greenlight on 285's on-ramps. "the ramp meters change from red to green there's no yellow. red to green every three to five seconds. There are like two of them, so you have to two lanes this car goes and this car goes." Three ramps will begin metering traffic Monday afternoon at rush hour. By the end of the week, 15 will be flashing red to green during the morning and evening commutes. The idea is to pace the flow of traffic onto the perimeter and decrease driver's travel times. right now you just kind of have merging madness from each on ramp everybody is jockeying to try to get into the main line. A Chicago transplant familiar with the meters say they are a good addition. "You don't have to worry about the person behind you if you're waiting to see if the traffic is going to calm down for a second, you don't have to think the person is going to come crashing in behind you cause you're waiting for one of those suicide merges." Though it make take a while for familiarity to set in and overcome the novelty. "Anything that changes anything in Atlanta will cause confusion". But be warned if you're caught moving in this game of red light/green light the penalty is as costly as a citation for running a light at an intersection.

Gas Marketers Pricing Policies

Date: **06/17/08 5pm** duration 1:30 Diana Davis

SCANA will accept the consent agreement as passed here today, nearly six months of controversy over gas marketer's pricing policies now at an end. SCANA and Georgia Natural Gas were both investigated by the Public Service Commission. Variable rate customers of both companies said they were being charged more than newer customers. In some cases up to \$50 dollars more a month. Greg Rubin: "I noticed that my rate plan did not match any of the rate plans I was seeing online." Georgia Natural Gas settled in March. Today, SCANA agreed to pay up to \$1.25 million dollars to involved customers. The actual amount going to *individuals* is small. Jeff Dickerson: "For those customers who experienced an inconvenience as a result of any confusion about pricing options for SCANA were offering \$25 dollars credit. And so that's what this settlement calls for and that's what we think is fair." SCANA says its pricing practices have always been fair and that it's up to consumers to compare prices. Dickerson: "We are absolutely certain we've done nothing wrong that we have violated no state statute or PSC rule." The agreement calls for SCANA and other marketers to inform customers about new pricing plans. One of the things that is most important is that your pricing plans need to be clear and transparent, both for Georgia Natural Gas and SCANA and anybody else that does business in our state.

Neighborhood Sues Ga DOT

Date: **04/25/08 6pm** duration :30 John Pruitt

A Sandy Springs subdivision is suing the Georgia DOT. Residents say a faulty DOT drainage pipe along Georgia 400 caused a sinkhole in the neighborhood on Queen Anne Court. Homeowners have already spent almost \$20,000 dollars to fix it. Rains keep washing away repairs. Now the homeowners association is taking the DOT to court, to force it to pay up. Brian Forstner: "You feel like you're the small guy that the government feels you just don't have enough time or resources to do battle with them. They're basically just trying to wait you out. That's frustrating." A DOT spokesperson told us the DOT can't comment on the lawsuit.

Clayton Sheriff's Billboard Controversy

Date: **04/01/08 12pm** duration :21 Fred Blankenship

A candidate for Clayton County Sheriff wants an investigation into two billboards promoting Sheriff Victor Hill. One promotes Hill's re-election ... the other is part of the Sheriff's "Quality of Life" initiative. Candidate Ernest Strozier says the billboards look identical and political, even though campaign funds did not pay for the second billboard. Sheriff Hill says the billboards are legal and send a positive message.

Lithonia City Hall

Date: 4/24/08 6pm duration :30 John Pruitt

More details now on the controversy surrounding Lithonia's Mayor. It started April 7th when Mayor Joyce McKibben and the city fought over her decision to fire the police chief. Hours later, the city changed the locks on city hall. Then on April 9th, police arrested two of the mayor's aides when they tried to get inside, after refusing to identify themselves. Two days later, no city workers got paid because no one signed payroll. They eventually got paid one day later when the Mayor Pro Tem signed the checks.

City Workers May Furlough

Date: **06/26/08 5pm**

duration :58

Diana Davis

Councilman Mitchell: "My hope again is that at the end of the day tomorrow we are able to say we don't have to do any furloughs." After a firestorm of controversy from Atlanta Police, Councilman Cesar Mitchell pulled his proposal to furlough police less than 24 hours after he introduced it. From the start Mitchell said he wanted to plug the city's budget gap without taking cops off the street. Mitchell: "I'm the first that will tell you how important public safety is to the community. I'm the first that will tell you that at the same time we've got to be responsive and responsible as council members in dealing with the budget." Police Union spokesman: "We feel like Mr. Mitchell has outraged every member of the Atlanta Police Department." The Atlanta Police Union taking aim at Mitchell's proposal saying any furloughs would endanger public safety. Sgt. Scott Kreher: "This council and the mayor's administration needs to stand up and be held accountable for the mistakes that they've made over the last couple of years with the finance department with the budget, not balance this budget on the backs of police officers that are protecting the city every day.

Racism Allegations Against Area Restaurant Owner

Date: **05/13/08 6pm**

duration :40

John Pruitt

There's a furor in Cobb County tonight over t-shirts some call racist. A Marietta restaurant owner is selling the shirts. They show a character similar to Curious George, with the slogan "Obama in 08". A small group of protestors chanted outside Mulligan's this afternoon, demanding the owner stop selling the shirts. Reverend Brown: "Take a good look at this. Supposing we could call up Martin Luther King Jr. What would he say?" Mike Norman: "I looked and thought, man look at those ears and look at that hairline ... that's what I say ... I didn't see anything offensive." Mulligan's owner says the protestors are just looking for something to get mad about. He's sold out of the shirts.

Date: **05/15/08 5am**

duration :37

Carol Sbarge

We've learned the publisher that owns the right to Curious George is considering legal action against a Cobb County bar owner, over a controversial t-shirt. Mike Norman owns Mulligans in Marietta. He recently started selling t-shirts with a likeness of the cartoon character and "Obama in 08". The Anti Defamation League told us the week the shirts represent an offensive stereotype. Bill Nigut: "He pretends that he does not understand what that t-shirt represents ... but he's not dumb." Norman says he does not see anything wrong with the shirts. The owner of an Alpharetta bar, also called Mulligan's says he wants everyone to know he's *not* connected to the Marietta bar or the t-shirts.

Date: **05/20/08 6pm**

duration :39

John Pruitt

The Barack Obama / Curious George t-shirt controversy is flaring up again today in Marietta. The newly formed "Cobb United for Change and Justice Coalition" held a news conference on the Marietta Square this afternoon. They're upset about a Marietta bar owner's t-shirts. It features a cartoon character of what appears to be Curious George with "Obama in 08" underneath. Some call it racist. Reverend Dwight Graves: "I am confident the people of Marietta will not put up with the negative, dehumanizing, inconsiderate behavior by a few who chose to be rude." Mike Norman owns Mulligan's Bar, which sold the shirts. We called him today, but did not get through. Last week Norman told us the shirt was never meant to be offensive.

Date: **05/25/08 8am**

duration :39

Anissa Centers

A local chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference now has ended protests surrounding a controversial Barack Obama t-shirt. The group held a rally at a Marietta Church last night. It celebrated what some call a minor victory after settling issues over these shirts. Some say the shirts are insensitive but the owner of the Marietta Mulligan's restaurant selling the shirts disagrees. Mike Norman: "It racist to me. If you come in this building and find hate..your brought it with you."SCLC spokesperson: "We're not going to stand for it. It doesn't matter who it is." We're told the restaurant is no longer selling the t-shirts.

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

Griffin Residents Upset Over Community Pool Management

Date: **06/10/08 7am** duration :39 Carol Sbarge

A developer has just days to drain a dirty pool, or the city will do it for him. This is the pool at the Coldwater Creek subdivision in Spalding County. It's been stagnant since last fall. You can see tadpoles are the only ones swimming. Developer Ron Kittle says three builders refused to pay thousands in homeowners association money to maintain amenities. They are trying to work out a solution. City officials told our consumer advisor, Jim Strickland, the entrances to the pool should immediately be barricaded so kids can't get in ... and the pool should be drained.

Neighbors Protest Lawrenceville "Group Home"

Date: **06/13/08 6pm** duration :43 John Pruitt

The fight over a Lawrenceville Group Home could be settled next week. The proposed site on Hurricane Shoals Road is next to a daycare and many neighbors say they're outraged. They say if the Quinn Home is allowed to relocate, their property values would go down and they would fear for the safety of the children. The owner of the home says those fears are unfounded because they don't treat violent criminals or sexual predators. The help recovering alcohol and drug addicts. Gene Brinkley: "The men who are here ... eight out of ten have kids of their own. They're trying to get back to their families. They're trying to restore their lives." Charles Whitehead: "I'm not against the Quinn House ... I'm against the location." The Lawrenceville Zoning Board is expected to take up the issue Tuesday.

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

Cobb Woman Upset Over Treatment by Police

Date: **04/10/08 17:10:40** duration :38 Fred Blankenship

A Cobb County woman is outraged about how she says she was treated by a Cobb County police officer. Pamela Herrington told us an officer with the quality of life unit came to her home to arrest her for putting trash on a neighbor's property. She says the officer continued handling her inappropriately even after telling him she was only wearing a t-shirt. Herrington: "As he's going to get ready to put me in the car, he pulled my shirt like this ... get you some clothes." An interval investigation found that the officer did nothing wrong. Herrington says at the time she didn't have trash collection and her nephew put the trash in her neighbor's yard.

