

City of Lawrenceville, Georgia
State of the City Address
August 2, 2010
Rex A. Millsaps, Mayor

It is my pleasure to inform you that the State of the City of Lawrenceville is good.

The City remains in a strong financial position.

Our electric rates are the lowest in the area and due to purchasing equity in existing plants and increasing our guaranteed share of the new expansion of Plant Vogtle to fifteen megawatts, we can maintain our low rates for generations to come.

Four years ago, the City was short in our electric supply. We were buying excess power from other Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia participants on a yearly basis. We purchased six megawatts of equity in several power plants from the City of College Park and we purchased four megawatts of power from equity in a combined cycle gas unit from the City of Douglas. This put us in a position to sell our output from Plant Vogtle Units 3 and 4 for twenty years to Jacksonville Electric and Power South. These entities will make our bond payments for twenty years and pay the City an estimated \$275,000.00 per megawatt premium based on production.

In 2036 and 2037, when this power returns to the City, through the use of reserves, we will pay the balance of the bonds and no costs of the Vogtle expansion, except operations, will be charged to our rate payers.

We continue to have some of the lowest gas rates in our area.

We are the largest member of the Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia by customer. The City serves almost 45,000 gas customers. Through MGAG the City has ownership in gas wells and pipelines and, with long-term purchase contracts, we will continue to maintain our low rates.

Our sanitation service is second to none. For a fee of \$7.00 per month (\$3.50 for senior citizens), we will pick up almost anything you place on the street.

However, in order to lower our costs for garbage disposal, we need your help. We need our citizens to recycle more. For every additional ton of recycling, we save \$32.82 in landfill costs alone and we protect our environment for generations to come.

Water is a different story.

In the 1970's, the City operated our own well system. We agreed to shut down our wells and buy water from Gwinnett County in order to help them increase their bonding capacity to build their plants. For that, we received a wholesale rate. On January 1, 2007, the County took away our wholesale rate, therefore, our water rates are higher than they could be.

We are in the process of re-opening our wells. We are already operating three wells. A fourth will be online in two months and five more in eleven months when our new water treatment plant is opened.

When this new plant is finished, we will modernize our existing plant at Rhodes Jordan Park and connect additional wells to that location.

This will reduce our cost of water and reduce our dependency on Lake Lanier. This cost reduction will be passed on to our citizens.

Our tax millage rate remains at 2.16 mills for this year. This is among the lowest in the county. With the decrease in property values, this millage equates to a \$178,000.00 reduction in taxes, almost 8%, for our citizens. Our 2011 proposed budget has been reduced to accommodate this shortage.

Our Police Department has relocated to their new building which will accommodate them for years to come as they prepare for the arrival of 15,000 college students within the next few years. Overall crime is down in the City and Lawrenceville remains a safe place to live, work, raise a family and retire.

Our Quality of Life Unit is working very hard, however, the large number of foreclosed properties in the City continues to make their job very difficult. Determining ownership of these properties is a challenge.

This month I plan to ask the City Council for approval to establish a \$1,000,000.00 interest-free revolving loan account for qualified builders to purchase our foreclosed homes. These homes will be improved and sold to owner-occupied buyers. (Preferably to school teachers, college professors or public safety personnel.)

When the last of the foreclosed homes are sold, this \$1,000,000.00 will return to the City.

We are in year two of our five-year campaign to resurface every street in the City. We have allocated \$1,000,000.00 per year to this project. This past year, we doubled our allocation to take advantage of low paving rates.

The biggest threat to our quality of life is the proposed expansion of the Gwinnett County Airport known as Briscoe Field. The fact that Gwinnett County is considering expansion is already affecting home sales in Lawrenceville. Nobody wants large airplanes flying over their house at 800 to 1,000 feet. I hope our citizens will join the City Council in opposing this effort.

Lastly, our lawsuit over service delivery with Gwinnett County went to Court today. The case is simple. We are asking Gwinnett County to stop taxing City residents for services that the County is not providing in the City. It is a State law and the County should abide by it.

Thank you for being with us tonight.

Lawrenceville is a great City and this Council is working hard to make it even better.

God Bless You
God Bless Lawrenceville, and
God Bless America