

July 2010 Newsletter

I have embraced social media networking and now have an official District 3 [Facebook group](#), entitled [Newton County District 3 Community Group](#).

Please join the group and learn about exciting events taking place in Newton County. My goal is to use this site to communicate between and among residents living in District 3. Feel free to post events open to the community, such as fundraisers, fall festivals, concerts, or anything that would foster community outreach. If your church or community organization has a Facebook group or page, please link to the District 3 group page as well. One important rule to remember, **KEEP YOUR ENTRIES POSITIVE**. If you have complaints or concerns, you may email me at nancy.schulz@co.newton.ga.us.

FY2011 Budget

Since June 15th, the Board of Commissioners has proposed and set a \$46,307,275 county M&O budget for fiscal year 2011, a significant decrease from the FY2009 budget of \$55,091,581 and the FY2010 of \$48,433,250. This represents a decrease of \$8,784,306 over the two years or about 19%. For FY 2011 this budget reflects a millage rate of 10.91%. Since 2000 the millage rate has been 9.73%. Due to a decrease in appraisals, the increase in the millage rate will not substantially increase a homeowner's taxes. Retaining the 9.73 millage rate would have required that the approved budget be lowered to \$42,843,813. As it is the county services have been cut approximately 15%. Adopting the \$46,307,275 budget allows the judicial system and law enforcement to operate at an acceptable level. A reduction in Force and restructuring of county services was necessary to balance the budget and will provide greater governmental efficiency. Engineering and Water Resources departments were combined with Public Works. A new Department of Developmental Services was created by combining Planning & Zoning and GIS. If the tax revenues continue to decline, as projected, the budget for FY2012 will be equally as difficult. Therefore, it is important for all of us to work together to find new strategies to address our county's revenue streams. We can begin this process by shopping locally.

NSP

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) is a grant program used for the redevelopment of abandoned and foreclosed homes and residential properties. In addition to the rehabilitation of foreclosed homes, the NSP program, in cooperation with the Independent Educational Community Development Group (IECDG), will provide guidelines for maintaining home quality and the livability of the community. Fairview Estates will be placing a Neighborhood Watch Program within the community that will serve as an ankle weight to further in the progression of strengthening the community. To date, the NSP program has purchased 9 homes in total, 3 of which are in Fairview Estates, and 6 have been rehabilitated. Newton County BOC has also purchased 12.1 acres from SunTrust to build a public park in Fairview Estates; the first phase of the contract will encompass approximately 6 acres for the actual park. Newton County has hired Alcovy Surveying and Engineering to design the park. Construction contracts will be granted in August.

