

## **March Newsletter**

### Current Budget FY09 Adjustments:

Newton County is required by law to balance its budget. Consequently, when property tax revenues resulted in a \$5 million shortfall, the Board of Commissioners was forced to take action. All department heads were asked to examine their budgets and cut 20% of their operating expenses. A website was created to solicit from staff ideas to increase efficiency, eliminate wasteful spending, preserve jobs, retain quality service, and use taxpayer dollars wisely. I am proud to report that all staff, employees, managers, department heads, constitutional officers, and the Board of Commissioners worked together to reduce spending sufficiently to achieve the balanced budget required by the state of Georgia...and we were able to do this without instituting furloughs or across the board salary cuts. The employees demonstrated the highest degree of professionalism and a "can-do" spirit in addressing this budget shortfall. Some of the cuts will be felt by the public, such as the library closing on Saturdays. However, there was a conscious effort not to adversely affect public safety.

### Budget FY10:

The BOC will begin working on the FY2010 budget on April 2. Any ideas related to priorities in spending, increasing efficiency, eliminating waste, and generating revenue are more than welcomed. I will keep you updated on our progress. We will hold public hearings during May and June. Our FY2010 must be finalized by June 30.

### Leadership Collaborative:

The Leadership Collaborative is made up of officials from the Board of Commissioners, Board of Education, Water and Sewer Authority, the five Municipalities, and the Chamber of Commerce. The purpose is to foster collaboration between all of the entities. This group held its Annual meeting March 6 & 7 in Athens. We spent the weekend planning for the future of Newton County. Our meeting was facilitated by representatives from The Center, Georgia Tech, and various consultants. The Newton County Leadership Collaborative is recognized throughout the state of Georgia a unique asset to our county. Our contacts in Economic Development at the state level acknowledge that the Collaborative gives us an advantage over other counties and positions us positively in terms of business recruitment.

### Almon Community Plan:

Presentation of the plan for the Almon to Brown Bridge Corridor will be held on Thursday, March 19, 2009 at 5pm at The Center for Preservation and Planning, 2104 Washington Street, Covington, GA 30014.