

# **OCONEE COUNTY**

## **THE YEAR IN REVIEW**



**Fiscal Year Ending 6/30/12**

## THE YEAR IN PHOTOS





# OCONEE COUNTY MISSION STATEMENT

Provide the highest quality services in a fiscally responsible manner to promote the health, safety and general welfare of all Oconee County citizens.

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Dear Fellow Oconee County Citizens,

The Oconee County Board of Commissioners is pleased to provide this report on our county department activities for the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2012. This past fiscal year has seen a number of changes and has resulted in more changes that will occur in the next fiscal year.

Throughout your county government, we have reduced budgets and personnel over the past few years. This trend continued as we offered another round of early-retirements during FY12. Although not taking effect until FY13, these retirements will present significant changes to our county government operations and will facilitate the merger of the Planning & Code Enforcement departments. Additionally, Harriette Browning will step down as Tax Commissioner after 41 years of service in part-time, full-time and elected capacities.

Oconee County's general fund budget has decreased from \$25.2 million to \$20.25 million over just the last four years. Our tax digest shrunk almost 7 percent this year due to declining property values. Overall, the gross tax digest has decreased approximately 19 percent in the past five years. However, the Board of Commissioners has held the county millage rate constant for the past 6 years.

On February 17, Gov. Deal and Caterpillar announced that they would be constructing an assembly plant within Oconee County, Athens-Clarke County, and the City of Bogart. This facility is returning to the United States from Japan and will employ 1400 individuals. Representing an investment of over \$200 million into the community, this facility will assemble mini hydraulic excavators and small track-type tractors.

Although it took a while to see the project completed, the Jennings Mill Parkway extension opened in March. The completion of this project allows for easier access onto and off of Loop 10, as well as opening up numerous acres for development in the corner of the county that had been identified for retail development through our planning processes. The Bishop Company has already begun construction on a movie theater and retail spaces that will encompass approximately 485,000 square feet.

During FY12, a significant project to replace aging wastewater infrastructure leading to the Calls Creek Treatment Plant was completed. This project, partially completed with a partial forgivable loan funds, ensures that the collection and treatment system of wastewater for Oconee County residents will meet the needs of the community for many years.

Oconee County has also implemented a new website that we hope allows you to find more information on your county government with far greater ease. This new format allows us more options than we previously had to disseminate information. Additional information about each of our county departments is also online.

I trust that this Year in Review will provide you with facts and information that help you know more about your community. Feel free to visit our new website for more information, or call the Courthouse at 706-769-5120 for more information.

Thank you for all that you do to make Oconee County a great place to live, work and play!

For the Board of Commissioners,

Melvin Davis, Chairman

Jim Luke, Commissioner – Post 1  
Margaret Hale, Commissioner Post 3

John Daniell, Commissioner – Post 2  
Chuck Horton, Commissioner – Post 4

# **THE FUTURE**

## **UTILITIES**

The Oconee County Utility Department (OCUD) will be installing automated computer-read meters that will provide date/time and personal water consumption data for each account. During the fall of 2012, OCUD will be completing a board approved project to clean and conduct maintenance of the two Mars Hill water tanks. OCUD is also working with Athens-Clarke County to ensure that water and sewer infrastructure extensions are completed for the Caterpillar project.

## **FIRE**

Oconee County is in the process of constructing a new fire station in the Farmington area, in close proximity to the existing station. This will be a larger facility that will allow for larger equipment to be stored inside. Construction will begin in the fall of 2012 and the project is expected to be completed during the spring of 2013.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

Within the next fiscal year, Oconee County Parks & Recreation Department (OCPRD) will complete a walking trail at the Bogart Recreation Complex. As funds become available, the walking track at Oconee Veterans Park will be completed to provide a loop for walkers. OCPRD will also do routine sod and turf repairs to ensure that all fields under its control are properly maintained.

## **CIVIC CENTER**

The Civic Center will see upgrades during the next fiscal year in the form of new movable walls and partitions. These enhancements will allow the Civic Center to remain in good condition, making it an attractive location for meetings and events.

## **PLANNING & CODE ENFORCEMENT**

Effective mid-August 2012, Oconee County's Planning and Code Enforcement offices will be merged. Under the direction of Mr. B.R. White, the two departments will be merged into one and will be called the Planning and Code Enforcement office. This will allow the office to act as a one-stop shop for development related questions.

## **PUBLIC WORKS**

The Public Works department will be utilizing a new asphalt zipper to allow for deep patching and repairs to stabilize the base of county roads. This will allow for more uniform and structurally sound roads in the community.

Public works is also relocating its diesel fuel tank for more convenient use by the Board of Education, Fire Department, and various county departments.

## **COURTHOUSE**

Oconee County will be looking to the future in order to expand the parking lot behind the Courthouse to allow for adequate parking on days when multiple courts are in session. This project will help ensure that individuals will not encounter unnecessary obstacles while doing business at the Courthouse.

## **THE ECONOMY**

The last twelve months were significant in the economic development evolution within Oconee County. A number of activities resulted in new “firsts” for the community.

The biggest was the announcement on February 17, 2012 that Caterpillar’s Building & Construction Products Division would be constructing an assembly facility on the Orkin Tract, actually resting in three jurisdictions (Oconee County, Athens-Clarke County, and the City of Bogart). This announcement was the culmination of 64 days of collaboration and cooperation between representatives from the jurisdictions.

Caterpillar is constructing the facility to bring approximately 1,400 jobs back to the United States from Japan due to logistics costs. The company is also making an investment of over \$200 million into the facility in the next few years which will only continue to increase over time. Caterpillar will begin assembly of mini-hydraulic excavators small and -track tractors (D3, D4 & D5 models) in the year 2013 with full production phased in by the year 2018.

Additionally, The Bishop Company broke ground on its 485,000 square foot retail center located off of the Oconee Connector and Epps Bridge Road. After ground was broken on this project, crews began working feverishly through late-spring and summer months in order to have portions of the project ready to open in 2013 and 2014. At present, the developer has only announced that a 16 cinema theater to be operated by the Georgia Theater Company will be part of the project. Other tenants, primarily national tenants, will be announced by the developer at a later date.

Also during FY 2012, the Oconee County Industrial Development Authority began seeing fruits of the newly formed subcommittees that serve as working groups for the Authority. An Existing Business subcommittee submitted a survey to all businesses located in Oconee County and received over 200 responses which are guiding economic development actions today. The Product Development subcommittee continued the evaluation of how best to make the Gateway Tract marketable for businesses, with even more diligence after the announcement of Caterpillar less than one mile away. The Marketing and Attracting subcommittee developed a methodology for providing tax abatement to businesses locating or expanding within the county, with priority given to existing industries expanding in Oconee County.

Many other noteworthy activities have begun or are being planned in Oconee County. Multiple businesses are either expanding or evaluating expansion plans, new businesses are continuing to move to the area (Stripling’s General Store opening in Fall 2012 is only one example), and entrepreneurs throughout the county are figuring out new ways to create economic opportunities in Oconee County.

As evidenced by the Oconee County Code Enforcement office, there were 163 new business licenses issued within unincorporated Oconee County. Add to that all business licenses issued by the municipalities in the county and there were over 180 new businesses started in Oconee County during the past year. There is an age-old rule that “the best time to start a business is at the end of a recession” and it appears that this is holding true in Oconee County.



# OCONEE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY 2011-2012



Oconee County Emergency Management Agency is the local community-based equivalent of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency at the state level and the Federal Emergency Management Agency at the federal level. Oconee County EMA works closely with these agencies (as well as dozens of others, both public and private) before, during, and after emergencies and disasters.

The Oconee County Emergency Management Agency is responsible for assisting in the protection of lives and property of Oconee County citizens in the event of natural or manmade disasters. Emergency Management anticipates emergencies, takes steps to prevent loss of life and property, and provides quick response when havoc strikes.

Oconee County's Emergency Management Agency was established by the Board of Commissioners to develop and implement a county-wide program. The backbone of the countywide program is all emergency agencies and support agencies work together. Emergency management and other emergency agencies identify hazards that face each community and develop contingency plans for each potential emergency. Emergency management provides the expertise, training, and coordination that local governments need to protect lives and property.

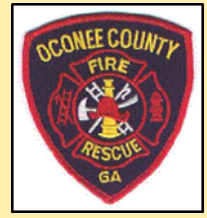






# OCONEE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE 2011-2012



Oconee County Fire Rescue provides Medical First Responder services to the citizens of the county with five (5) rescue trucks and one (1) mass casualty truck. These services are provided by 85 medically trained volunteer fire rescue personnel with an average response time of 6.5 minutes. National EMS Inc. provides Advanced Life Support transport services in Oconee County through a contract with Athens Regional Medical Center and St. Mary's Healthcare System. In October 2012, Oconee County Fire Rescue will begin another Medical First Responder class and train additional volunteers to respond to medical emergencies in the community.

### 85 Oconee County Fire Rescue Personnel – Medically Trained

- 48 First Responders – over 80 hours training
- 29 EMTs – over 400 hours training
- 2 Paramedics – over 1000 hours training
- 6 – Registered for First Responder training

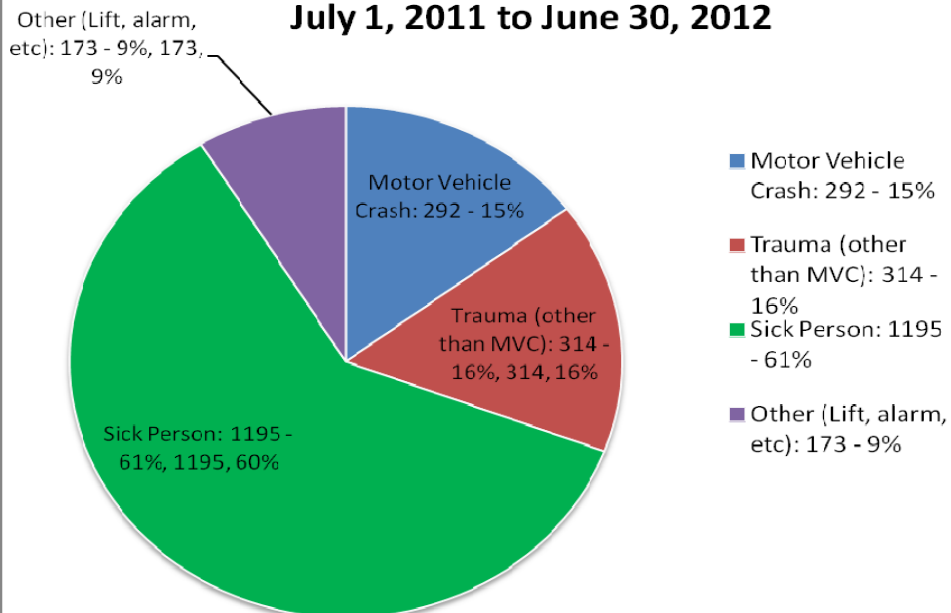


### Total Emergency Medical Responses

2007 – 1,759  
2008 – 1,804  
2009 – 1,852  
2010 – 1,821  
2011 – 1,851



### Total Emergency Medical Responses July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012







# OCONEE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

## FIRE DEPARTMENT 2011-2012



Oconee Fire Rescue is responsible for planning, coordinating and implementing the fire prevention and suppression activities of seven volunteer fire stations in Oconee County. These seven fire stations are staffed with 144 Volunteer Firefighters with an average response time of 6.7 minutes.

Oconee Fire Rescue is also responsible for: responding to all structure fires in Oconee County and other applicable calls; keeping updated records for ISO (Insurance Services Organization) and working to achieve the best ISO rating; coordinating joint training for all stations; providing fire safety classes for schools and daycare centers; working with local and state agencies on arson investigations; recruiting new volunteer firefighters and coordinating volunteer firefighter training.

### 144 Oconee County Fire Rescue Personnel

- 31 State Certified Firefighters
- 107 National Certified Firefighters
- 7 Registered for Firefighter 1 Training
- 79 First Responder or EMT Certified
- 128 Hazardous Material Certified
- 118 Vehicle Extrication Certified

### Total Fire Responses

2003: 684	2007: 903
2004: 795	2008: 801
2005: 750	2009: 747
2006: 787	2010: 814
	2011: 764

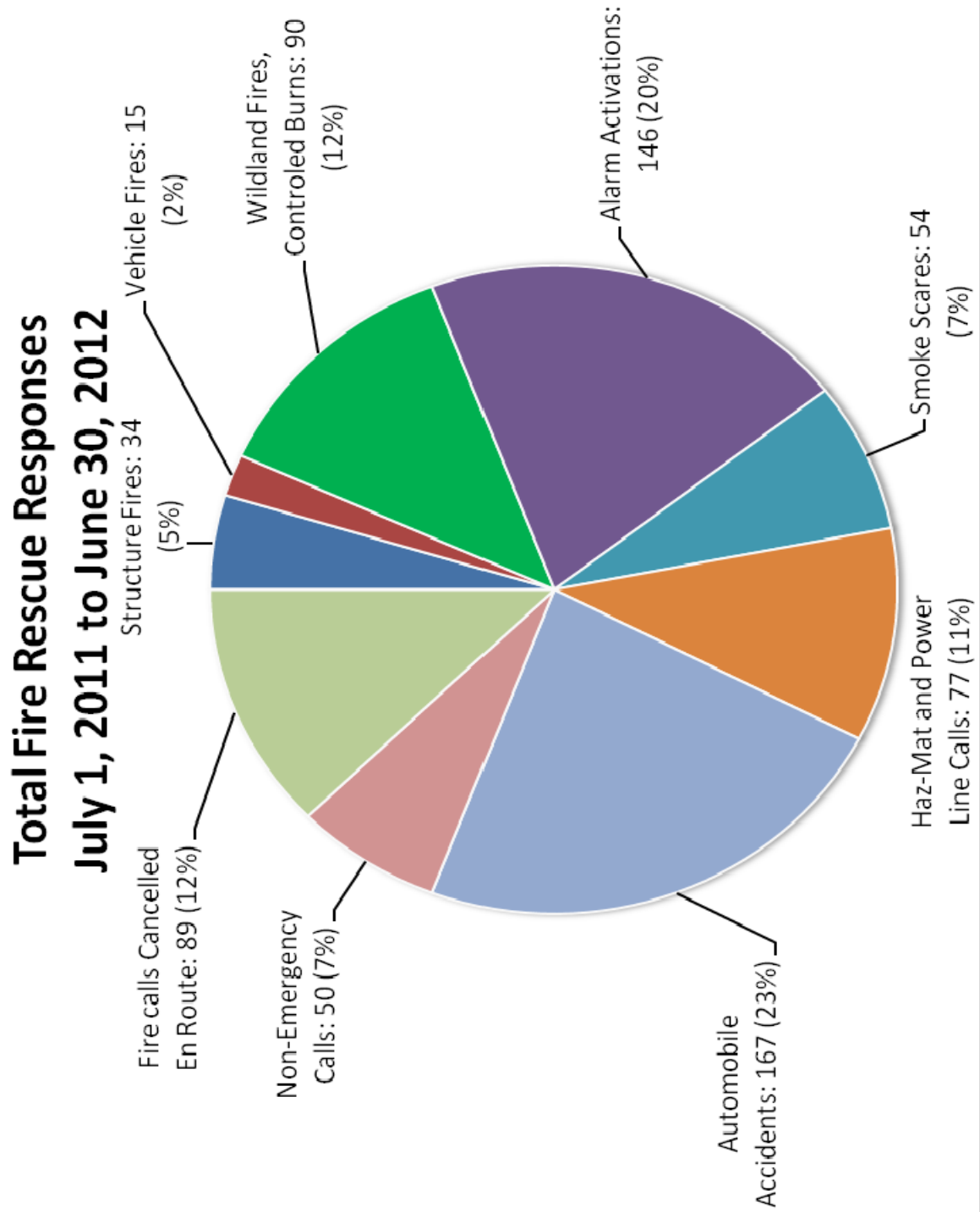


2011 State Firefighter Competition  
1<sup>st</sup> Place Team



February 2012 House Fire

# OCONEE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE



# OCONEE COUNTY LIBRARIES

There are two Libraries in Oconee County: the Oconee County Library and Bogart Public Library. The libraries in Oconee County are funded by four local agencies: the Oconee County School District, the Oconee County Board of Commissioners, the City of Watkinsville, and the City of Bogart.

During the 2012 Fiscal Year, Special Local Option Sales Tax funds allowed the Oconee Library to install a new, larger book return bin and a new heat pump/air conditioner that serves study rooms.

In spite of reduced hours of library operations, circulation at Oconee County's libraries actually increased. Additionally, the number of transits sent and received by both libraries increased over the prior year.

## FY11-FY12 comparisons:

Circulation at Oconee + 1%	Transits Received by both libraries +6%
Circulation at Bogart -3%	Transits Sent by both libraries +2%

One of the notable statistics about the library is the extremely high number of new library cards issued. Over 1200 individuals obtained new library cards from one of the two branches during FY12.

The libraries did experience some decreases in usage rates at both locations. However, the decrease in hours of operation has a strong correlation to the reduced attendance and computer usage within the facilities.

## BY THE NUMBERS...

**Checkouts:** 256,635 Total at both libraries

**# New Library Cards Issued:** 1,233

**# Computer Sessions Used:** 56,084

**Reference Questions Answered:** 84,668

**Number of Visits (Door Count):** 241,524

### **Watkinsville Branch Hours:**

Sunday 2:00pm-6:00pm; Monday/Wednesday:  
10:00am-9:00pm; Tuesday/Thursday/Friday/  
Saturday: 10:00am-6:00pm.

### **Bogart Branch Hours:**

Monday/Wednesday/Friday: 10:00am-6:00pm;  
Tuesday/Thursday: 12:00pm-8:00pm.





## PARKS & RECREATION

OCPRD focuses on Excellence in Youth Sports. The department maintains four parks with over 632 acres: Herman C. Michael Park, Oconee Veterans Park, Heritage Park and Bogart Sports Complex.

- Herman C. Michael Park offers three playing fields, six tennis courts, one gymnasium with a full basketball court, two volleyball courts, soccer/multi use field, playground, walking trails, the “Herm” disc golf course, new outdoor basketball courts and a picnic shelter.
- Oconee Veterans Park offers a community center with meeting space for community use, indoor walking track, fitness area, and a gymnasium. The park also offers tennis courts, soccer fields, baseball fields, outdoor walking trails, a playground, and a picnic shelter. An average of 2,273 people use the fitness area per month, while the gymnasium and indoor walking track see an average of 1,104 users per month.
- Heritage Park offers a large open arena, feeder barn, bike trails, horse trails and over 364 acres of natural resources. Additionally, the historic Central Schoolhouse and the beginnings of a historic village are located at Heritage Park.
- Bogart Sports Complex offers six lighted baseball and multipurpose fields, walking trail, two playgrounds, and a picnic shelter.



	2011	2012
Field & Facility Rentals	175	250
Program Participants	4,500	3,600
Special Program & Community Event Participants	8,300	13,000
Day trips to fitness center	59,000	27,206
Active Fitness Memberships	1,400	1,190

These figures do not take into account daily passive use of the parks for horseback riding, walking, running, picnics, playground use, or for spectators for various events.

### **Special Events & Tournaments**

- Punt, Pass, and Kick: over 30 participants
- Table Tennis Tournament: 27 competitors
- The 7th Annual Touch a Truck event: over 700 in attendance with 20 different vehicles were on hand for families to enjoy
- Pitch, Hit, and Run: at the Bogart Sports Complex with 30 participants
- May Day Madness V: 55 tournament participants



## PARKS & RECREATION

Oconee County is a great place to live, work & PLAY!

### Programs

- Fall programs such as Tackle Football, Flag Football, Soccer, and Cheerleading had 1,307 participants enrolled.
- The winter season had over 600 young people and adults participate in Basketball programs.
- Spring soccer had over 850 participants enrolled with 96 teams.
- This spring we had 115 participants enrolled in various programs such as Homeschool PE, Volleyball, Start Smart Baseball, and Yoga.
- Over 400 adults participated in the spring season of Adult softball with 27 teams.
- The After School program for 2011-2012 had average of 135 participants.
- Summer Day Camp was at full capacity with 170 participants.
- Held 24 Summer Sports Camps with over 680 participants enrolled.



### Volunteers

**OCPRD appreciates the many volunteer coaches who work with our programs throughout the year. We estimate over 18,400 volunteer hours have been donated by our coaches since Fall 2012. The recorded value per hour of a volunteer is \$18.77 which totals over \$345,368.00 dollars the county has saved by having great volunteers!**

- 235 volunteer coaches donated 9,400 volunteer hours of service to Fall youth programs.
- In the winter season, we had 75 volunteer coaches who donated 3,000 hours of services.
- More than 150 volunteer coaches in the spring donated 6,000 hours of service to the youth programs offered.

**OCPRD also appreciates the many volunteers who work with our special events and on park projects during the year. We estimate over 2,600 volunteer hours for special events have been donated since Fall 2012, saving the county over \$48,802.00 dollars!**

- Workdays in the fall and spring at Heritage Park and Oconee Veterans Park.
- Assisting with the Easter Egg Hunt and Oconee July 4th Spectacular.

### Departmental Awards

- 2011 State Publication Award for OCPRD Quarterly Program Brochure
- 2011 State Programmer of the Year – Whitney England Byce
- 2011 State Distinguished Professional of the Year – Lisa D. Davol





## SENIOR CENTER

The Oconee Co. Senior Center is located at the Veteran's Park in Watkinsville. The Center has been in operation at this facility since November of 2008. The building is 11,000 square feet with a large dining room that can accommodate 200 seniors, a commercial kitchen, dance and exercise room, billiard and game room, craft and card game room, Seniors' Shop, pergola/patio area and computer lab. There is access to outside walking trails and close proximity to a gymnasium and exercise equipment.

Services are offered to Oconee seniors who are 60 years of age or older. Seniors can participate in congregate meals, home delivered meals, transportation, recreation, exercise, consumer and nutrition programs, computer class, line dance and ballroom dance classes, crafts, games, parties, and much more. Partnerships with local businesses such as Trader Joe's and Publix are a bonus to seniors.



Some of the special events for this past year have been Star Spangled Senior Celebration, Family Day, Old Fashioned Carnival, trip to New England and Cape Cod, Drawing Class, trip to Cherry Blossom Festival, picnics on the patio, Halloween party, Yoga class, Country Music Explosion, Zumba classes, Thanksgiving and Christmas parties, Valentine Dance, St. Patrick's Day Party, Living Well Classes by UGA, special music programs, Summer Senior Health Fair and much more.

More than 400 different seniors have received services in the past year. Seniors have enjoyed approximately 14,000 congregate and home delivered meals, 12,000 round trips and 14,000 recreation services. The staff at the Oconee Co. Senior Center is committed to providing programming and services that allow Oconee seniors the highest quality of life. Our services extend from the very active sixty year olds to 90 year olds who still have a zest for life and activities.





## PROPERTY APPRAISAL

In 2011, the number of housing sales increased in Oconee County, ending a four year trend of steadily declining fair-market home purchases. Similar to trends seen throughout the nation, Oconee County's residential sales have seen small but positive growth over the past year. There were 3.5 percent more houses sold in Oconee County during 2011 than 2010. Additionally, the average sales price increased by \$3,814, or 1.5 percent from 2010 to 2011.

The property appraisal office has a difficult charge; it must determine the fair market value of all property within the county. Under state law, the tax digest must mirror the sales data very closely. To that end, the Georgia Department of Revenue does an audit of all counties in the state to determine if their assessments are consistent with sales. Oconee County's latest sales ratio was 39.31%. The state requires that counties target a 40% ratio, with a +/- 2% margin of error allowed.

Historical Trends for Improved Residential Sales					Weighted Averages	
New Construction			Existing Construction		New & Existing Construction	
Year	# of Sales	Average \$/ Sale	# of Sales	Average \$/ Sale	# of Sales	Average \$/ Sale
2002	203	\$260,779.00	346	\$209,146.00	549	\$228,237.98
2003	263	\$274,926.00	361	\$208,915.00	624	\$236,736.94
2004	203	\$330,198.00	330	\$229,337.00	533	\$258,068.00
2005	263	\$315,062.00	427	\$255,861.00	690	\$278,426.00
2006	243	\$355,517.00	458	\$266,158.00	701	\$297,134.00
2007	199	\$382,152.00	350	\$255,770.00	549	\$301,581.00
2008	137	\$370,452.00	207	\$269,004.00	344	\$309,406.00
2009	36	\$361,717.00	239	\$265,079.00	275	\$277,729.00
<b>2010*</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>\$324,616.00</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>\$244,920.00</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>\$252,291.00</b>
<b>2011*</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>\$302,265.00</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>\$247,181.00</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>\$256,105.00</b>
*These values were compiled from <b>Fair Market Value, Questionable FMV, Bank Loan and non-FMV sales. 2011 sales are through 12/31/2011.</b> New sales include 2010 and 2011 year built. Custom built homes not sold on the open market are <b>not</b> included.						

In FY12, there were 538 appeals filed where property owners contested the assessment of their property's fair market value.

## TAX COMMISSIONER

The goal of the Tax Commissioner's office is to serve the public to the best of its ability using the rules and regulations promulgated by the Department of Motor Vehicle Division and the Georgia Department of Revenue Property Tax Unit and to strengthen the quality of local government through professional management. The Tax Commissioner's office serves as an agent of the Motor Vehicle Division and State Revenue Commissioner for the registration of motor vehicles, and performing all functions relating to billing, collecting, disbursing and accounting for all ad valorem taxes collected in Oconee County. The office issues and collects taxes for Oconee County based on the annual millage rate set by municipal, county and school governments.

In FY12, the office maintained a 99 percent collection rate of property taxes at the end of the fiscal year. It also maintained tag and title processing time to a minimum of two days.

In FY13, the office has strategic goals to serve the public to the best of our ability and strengthen the quality of local government, as well as to maintain a 99% collection rate of property taxes.

Harriette Browning will be stepping down as Tax Commissioner following the conclusion of her eighth term and over 40 years of service in the Oconee County Tax Commissioner's Office. We thank her for her dedicated service to Oconee county and wish her the best in retirement.

<b>TAX COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE DATA</b>	
<b>Tag Registrations Issued</b>	35,741
<b>Ad Valorem</b> collected for Vehicles & Mobile Homes for County purposes	\$932,710
<b>Ad Valorem</b> collected for Vehicles & Mobile Homes for School purposes	\$1,805,522
<b>Tax Parcels</b> for tax year 2011	17,270
<b>Property Tax</b> collected for County purposes - Current Year	\$9,076,637
<b>Property Tax</b> collected for County purposes - Prior Years (Prior years tax consists of tax collected in 2010 and prior years.)	\$194,859
<b>Property Tax</b> collected for School purposes - Current Year	\$22,118,916
<b>Property Tax</b> collected for School Purposes - Prior Years (Prior years tax consists of tax collected in 2010 and prior years.)	\$474,816
<b>Change in Tax Digest</b> (% Growth year-to-year)	-7.18%

## ANIMAL CONTROL

Oconee County's Animal Control Department oversees the shelter that took in 878 animals during FY 2012. The facility is dependent upon numerous volunteers to ensure the care of the animals housed there. During FY 2012, volunteers donated their time, efforts and energies at the shelter almost 458 times! These volunteers help ensure that the staff are able to operate the shelter at extremely high levels of service and provide the animals with love and support. Unfortunately, volunteer numbers dropped by approximately 35%.



The mission of the Animal Control Department is to assist, protect and educate the public on animal care, animal welfare issues, and to enforce the county's animal control ordinance. Activity within the Animal Control Department during the past two fiscal years are shown below.

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Visits</b>	<b>1,428</b>	<b>1,659</b>
<b># of Calls</b>	<b>73,782</b>	<b>50,123</b>
<b># of Complaints</b>	<b>1,531</b>	<b>1,370</b>
<b># Volunteers</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>458</b>
<b># Adopted</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Trans. to Licensed Agencies</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>236</b>
<b># of Returns to owner</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>128</b>
<b># of Intakes</b>	<b>1,148</b>	<b>878</b>





## CIVIC CENTER

The Oconee County Civic Center provides meeting and performance space for a wide variety of civic organizations and private groups, in addition to public functions. The Civic Center is greatly utilized by the Oconee County School System, Oconee County Government Departments, and other private sector organizations and groups.

The sub-dividable Banquet Room is utilized for every type of event from training seminars to weddings and receptions. The fully equipped proscenium stage Theatre hosts stage shows, awards presentations, weddings, funerals, ceremonies and all types of musical events.

### Projects Undertaken

The Divider wall in the Banquet Room underwent a complete refurbishing. We built a linen washing room to launder tablecloths and skirts. We painted the entire Banquet Room and Kitchen utilizing in-house labor and County resources. The storage of scenery and various equipment for regular Theatre users has been discontinued. We are now in the process of stocking only platforms and standard stage hardware that can be utilized by all Theatre users.

### New Initiatives

We provided off-site production services for four different County events. We fully implemented an in-house linen service which saves money by cutting down on outside linen rentals. Another cost saving initiative was to take over maintenance of the plants in our Rotunda. This should save us approximately \$1000 per year. So far, the plants are surviving. We fully implemented credit card acceptance for payments. There were two separate energy audits done of the Civic Center. We began tracking the exact types of events that we are unable to book due to calendar or space issues. WiFi capability for meetings and training events was increased to approximately 50 users at the same time.



### Accomplishments of Note

The number of events occurring at the Civic Center increased by 10% over the previous year. School system events increased by 18%. The Oconee County Library moved its annual used book sale to the Civic Center this year. The time and space flexibility increased the success of their event. We had two different paranormal groups investigate the Historic William Daniel House and both proclaimed it to be free of any entities willing to let their presence be known. We streamlined our storage procedures and spaces. An upgrade in software and the addition of Apple hardware has given us the ability to control sound in the Theatre through a wireless connection anywhere in the building.

	<b>FY09</b>	<b>FY10</b>	<b>FY11</b>	<b>FY12</b>
<b># School System Events Hosted</b>	188	210	171	201
<b># County Government Events Hosted</b>	91	51	83	89
<b># Private Events Hosted</b>	165	138	140	143
<b># Total Events Hosted</b>	444	399	394	433

## CODE ENFORCEMENT

The mission of the Oconee County Code Enforcement department is to preserve and promote public safety, protect property rights by regulating and controlling the design, construction, occupancy, use and location of facilities within unincorporated Oconee County.

The Code Enforcement department enforces construction codes, zoning laws, state and local litter laws, environmental laws, soil erosion ordinances and all county ordinances passed by the Board of Commissioners (except animal control). The department issues all building permits, commercial and residential including plumbing, electrical, HVAC, gas, logging, signs, driveway, soil erosion, house moving, parade, road race, solicitation, swimming pool, mobile home, solid waste hauling, canvassing and underground utilities.

Code Enforcement also issues new addresses for properties, reviews commercial and residential building plans, site plans, preliminary plats and final plats for review. The Fire Marshal reviews all commercial plans and inspects commercial and residential construction for compliance with all fire codes, egress, capacity, and handicap accessibility.

	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Commercial Permits</b>	54	38	28	39
<b>Mobile Home Permits</b>	2	8	3	9
<b>Residential Permits</b>	68	69	82	113
<b>Occupation Tax Permits Issued</b>	1,281	1,234	1,209	1,155

During FY12, Code Enforcement issued 113 single-family building permits and 269 permits for commercial and non residential buildings.

Building Inspectors completed 1,081 inspections. Code Enforcement conducted 5,679 inspections for soil erosion and code violations. There were 46 non-compliance orders issued as a result of these inspections. The department issued 4 citations for code violations. 48 sign permits were issued.

Code enforcement is also responsible for registering and collecting occupation taxes. A total of 162 new occupation tax certificates were issued and 993 renewals during FY12 were processed.

The value of the 113 residential permits was \$30,410,351. And the value of commercial and non Residential permits was \$9,574,951.

## OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES

Operations and Facilities has a staff of 19 employees. We perform several basic functions which include Facility maintenance, Facility custodial, interoffice courier, and Courthouse Security screening. We accomplish these tasks with day to day routine work assignments and by working with contractors and vendors as well. Our department completed over 800 work orders in FY12. Our Courthouse Security greets and scans all Courthouse visitors to assure potential weapons do not enter.

During FY12, the Oconee County Operations and Facilities Department completed several projects in order to enhance many of our county buildings. A few major SPLOST projects that were completed were:

- the reroofing of the County Courthouse, which was completed in March of 2012, at a cost of \$237,500
- the Old Jail Renovation that included exterior and interior painting was completed in April of 2012, at a cost of \$18,975
- the recoating of the Government Annex parking lot, at a cost of \$9,375.00.



Courthouse Roof



Old Jail

At the close of FY12, the installation of sprinklers began in the back half of the Government Annex, which was completed in July of FY13, also as a SPLOST Project, at a cost of \$25,000.

Various other projects were completed and paid out of the General Fund. This would include painting at several other facilities such as the exterior of the Eagle Tavern, various fire stations, as well as the installation of carpet in several buildings at a cost of approximately \$20,000.

Some projects that are planned for FY13 include the recoating of the Government Annex roof and 2 new HVAC systems, Senior Center HVAC upgrades, Courthouse Parking Expansion, Exterior Painting of Civic Center and interior painting in the Courthouse.



Gov't Annex Parking



Eagle Tavern



## HUMAN RESOURCES

Oconee County employs individuals in many different capacities in order to provide the services demanded by the residents of Oconee County. Employees are classified into eight categories identifying their roles and reporting requirements. These categories are shown below.

	<b>As of 6/30/2012</b>
<b>Full-Time</b>	228
<b>Part-Time</b>	32
<b>Seasonal</b>	32
<b>Elected Officials</b>	10
<b>Enterprise Fund (Utility Department)</b>	22
<b>Reimbursed to County</b>	8
<b>Board Members (Elections &amp; Assessors)</b>	9
<b>Bailiffs</b>	3
<b>Total Employment</b>	<b>344</b>



2012 Wellness Fair

In January 2012, the County launched an Employee Wellness Program – “The Beat Goes On.” This program is sponsored by Athens Regional Medical Center, Health Plan Select and The Waller Agency.

The County Theme of the Program is W.O.W. – Working On Wellness. After completing 6 months of the Program, the County has 76% of its eligible workforce on the Wellness Program. In the recently ended initial Oconee County Lose2Win 2012 Weight Loss Contest, the 32 participants lost a total of 227.7 pounds and saw 41.5 inches of reduced waist circumferences.

Congratulations to all Working On Wellness Participants! Keep up the great work!!!

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

During the 2012 fiscal year, Oconee County commissioned Vivify Creative, located in Watkinsville, to redesign a new website. Making its debut in February 2012, the new site is more attractive, easily accessible and contains added features like a search engine, a sortable calendar with county events and the ability to fill out forms online. The “How Do I...?” page contains frequently asked questions and answers. With the redesign and unlimited data storage, documents can now remain online indefinitely. Older documents can be found on the website through the “Archived” link.

## PLANNING

During the 2011-2012 fiscal year, the Planning Department staff responded to 3650 telephone calls and provided assistance to 736 customers in the office to discuss land uses, zoning of properties, administrative subdivision plats, proposed development projects, and development requirements.

<b>Accepted for Planning Commission:</b>	7 rezones, 4 special use/ CUPs, 3 revised final plats
<b>Accepted for Development Review Committee:</b>	18 preliminary plat/site plans, 17 site development plans
<b>Accepted for Review and Processing or Administrative Approval:</b>	116 administrative plats, 15 final plats, 43 sign application reviews with code enforcement
<b>Accepted for BOC:</b>	13 variances

The Planning Department webpage was enhanced during the past year to include the ability to view all upcoming rezone, variance, special use and UDC amendments online and contains a searchable version of the Unified Development Code.

In the joint effort to welcome Caterpillar to the community, the Planning Department has been meeting with interested parties, delegating plan review assignments, reviewing development plans, creating a special overlay district, and on-going evaluation of the project status. The Planning Department worked extremely closely with Athens Clarke County and the City of Bogart to ensure that all facets of the project were coordinated and that the company received consistent answers to their questions.

During the past fiscal year, a total of four sets of amendments to the Unified Development Code were prepared by the Planning Department and presented to the Board of Commissioners. Commissioners made changes to the UDC to clarify specific issues or eliminate unintended consequences that resulted from the prior language. Planning staff continuously reviews and scrutinizes the Unified Development Code for UDC conflicts and changes as needed.

Staff continues to work at length with real estate appraisers, banks and representatives from the FDIC verifying the stage of construction or completion on distressed and foreclosed developments under construction in the current economy. They also assist UGA's School of Environment and Design by compiling data for projects and participating in design critiques.



## PUBLIC WORKS

### MAJOR TRANSPORTATION UPGRADES AND IMPROVEMENTS

During FY 2012, the public works department oversaw several major transportation upgrades and improvements. Of note, the **Oconee Connector Extension** was completed and opened in March 2012. This project provides additional access to Loop 10 from the Epps Bridge retail corridor. Access to Loop 10 westbound is available from the completed Oconee Connector. Access from Loop 10 eastbound is available as well. Additionally, the project opens up additional acreage in Oconee County's largest retail node.



The **Mars Hill Road widening project** continues to be in the right-of-way acquisition phase. Right-of-way acquisition began in February 2011 and is expected to continue through late 2012 or early 2013. This phase is estimated to cost roughly \$9 million to be funded through Georgia DOT. Following the right-of-way acquisition, construction on the project is estimated to take two years after that phase is initiated. The construction phase will cost an estimated \$23 million, most of which will be funded through Georgia DOT.

Through state (LARP) and local (SPLOST) funds, the Public Works department **repairs and resurfaces roads** within Oconee County. The Road Department also conducts **Maintenance minimization** that ultimately extends the life of existing roads within the county.



Sanitation also falls under the purview of the Public Works Department. At the county's five **sanitation collection sites** (excluding the landfill location), there were 59,357 customers during the course of FY11. There were 33,885 collection site customers disposing of household waste, while 50,110 customers disposed of recyclable materials.



# TOURISM

## **Lights, Camera, Action!**

The Tourism Department has been working closely with the Oconee Economic Development Department and the Georgia Film, Music and Digital Entertainment Division to proactively attract motion pictures to the area. To date, we have been host to one independent film "Black Hats", a new pilot for the History Channel "Abandoned", one music video for the Drive by Truckers and several commercials. With the growing success of the film industry in Georgia, we'll continue to build relationships and position our area as a camera ready destination.

## **Group Tours:**

2012 was a successful year for group travel in Oconee County. Between advertising and attending various group tour related tradeshow, the Oconee County Tourism Department has been host to twelve successful group/bus tours. These interactive tours encompass an overview of the surrounding attractions and mainstays throughout the county.



## **Social Media:**

In keeping up with the fast growing demand for information with the internet savvy generations, Oconee County Tourism continues to maintain a presence on various online social media outlets. These include Facebook, Pinerest, Twitter, and YouTube to name a few. Be sure to join in on the conversation at the links to our pages below.

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/OconeeWatkinsvilleTourism>

Pinerest: <http://pinterest.com/visitoconeega/>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/#!/VisitOconeeGa>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/VisitOconeeGa>

## **Geocaching:**

Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunting game played throughout the world by adventure seekers equipped with GPS devices. The Oconee County Tourism Department has placed six caches around the County and invite locals and travelers so visit [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) and search Oconee County by typing in the zip code '30677' in the search bar! Good hunting!!

## **Annual Heritage Celebration:**

2011 was the last year that Oconee County held the Heritage Celebration at the Eagle Tavern.

## UTILITIES

The **Lampkin Branch Sanitary Sewer Line Replacement**, to replacement of 5,550 linear feet of 24" diameter sewer lines was completed in FY12. This project is to replace aging infrastructure on one of the sewer system's main collection lines.

### **Calls Creek W2PCF Pump Station and Headwords Replacement**

Development of new facilities to replace the existing headwords and pumping facilities used for pre treatment and pumping of raw sewage flows into Oconee County's Calls Creek WPCP. The new facility was constructed adjacent to the existing facilities site and includes a mechanical auger screen, grit collection and removal system, an access road, ancillary piping, valves and equipment control and monitoring systems.

Additional projects included

- extending waterline on Hodges Mill Road From Laurel Shoals Subdivision to Vintage Farms
- continuing the process of replacing all old manual read water meters with Radio Read meters to more efficiently record and monitor water usage.
- Oconee County will provide Sewer Service to the new Caterpillar Plant, Clarke County will provide Water Service.

During FY12, the total **demand for water** in Oconee County (July 2011-June 2012) was 1029.16 million gallons. Of the total demand, 954.16 million gallons (92.7%) were purchased from Bear Creek Reservoir, 70.474 million gallons (6.8%) were produced by Oconee County wells, and 4.526 million gallons (<1%) was purchased from Barrow County. Additionally, 51.842 million gallons was purchased from Oconee County by Walton County under an agreement approved by the Board of Commissioners during FY12.

The average daily demand for water during was 2.82 million gallons per day compared to the 2.56 million gallons per day used during FY11.

During FY12, **Oconee County received 31.45 inches of rain**. This figure was far short of the 68.20 inches that the county received during FY10 and 52.40 inches received in FY11. The difference from FY11 to FY12 can basically be attributed to the months of August '11 and January 2012 when Oconee County received 3.5 inches of rain, compared to the 18.4 inches received

during the same months in the year prior.

	As of June 30, 2011	As of June 30, 2012
Water Customers	8,690	8,803
Sewer Customers	1,455	1,534

Oconee County's water **and wastewater systems each had small increases in the number of customers** for each service over the previous year.

Over **190 million gallons of wastewater was treated** during FY12 by OCUD. There were 117.801 million gallons treated at the Call's Creek WRF, while 73.447 million gallons were treated at the Rocky Branch LAS facility—520,000 gallons of wastewater treated daily by OCUD.

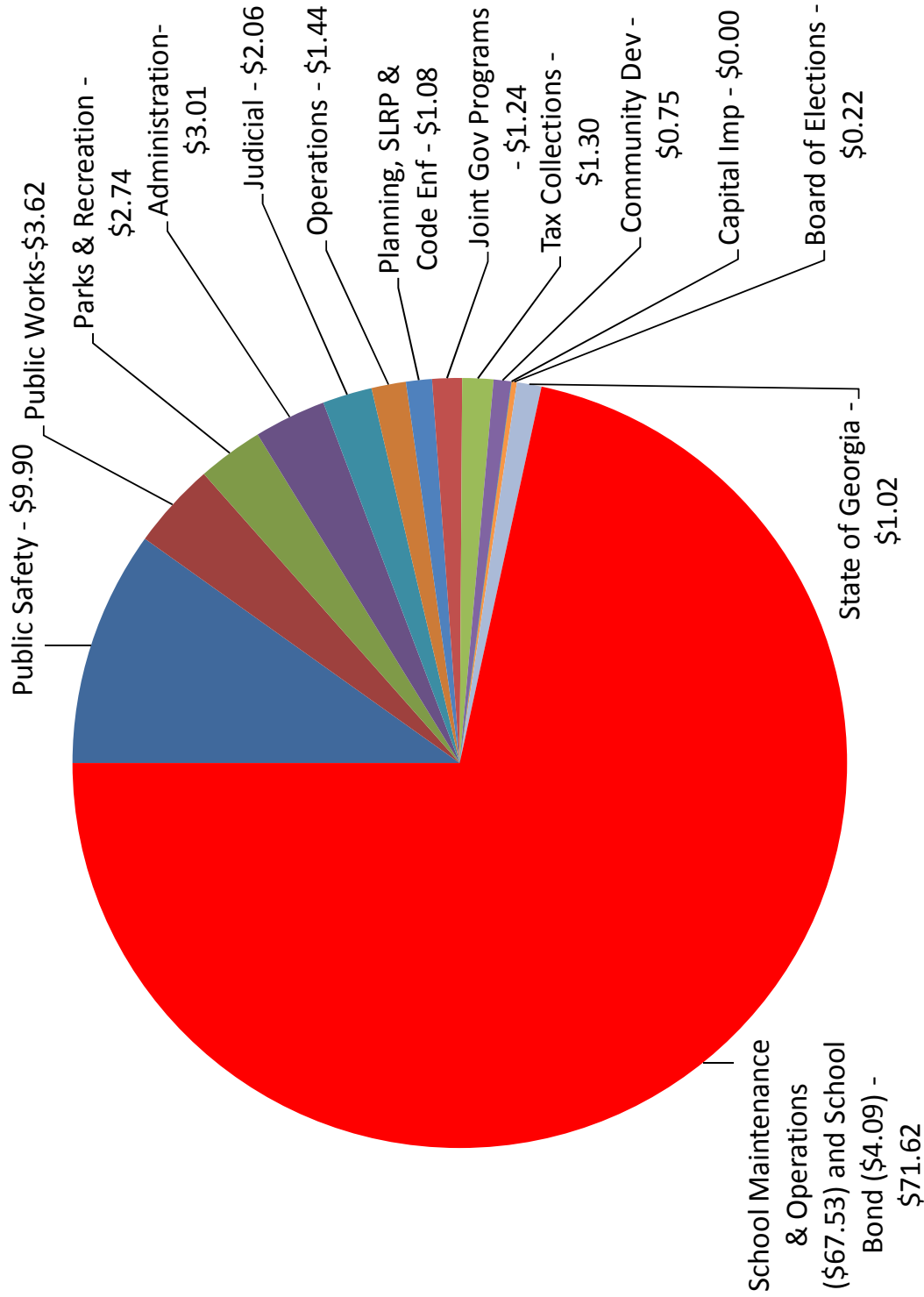
# YOUR \$2,000 TAX BILL.....

27.4% BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS (\$547) – 6.68 mills (Unincorporated)

71.6% BOARD OF EDUCATION (\$1,433) – 17.50

1.0% STATE OF GEORGIA (\$20) – .25

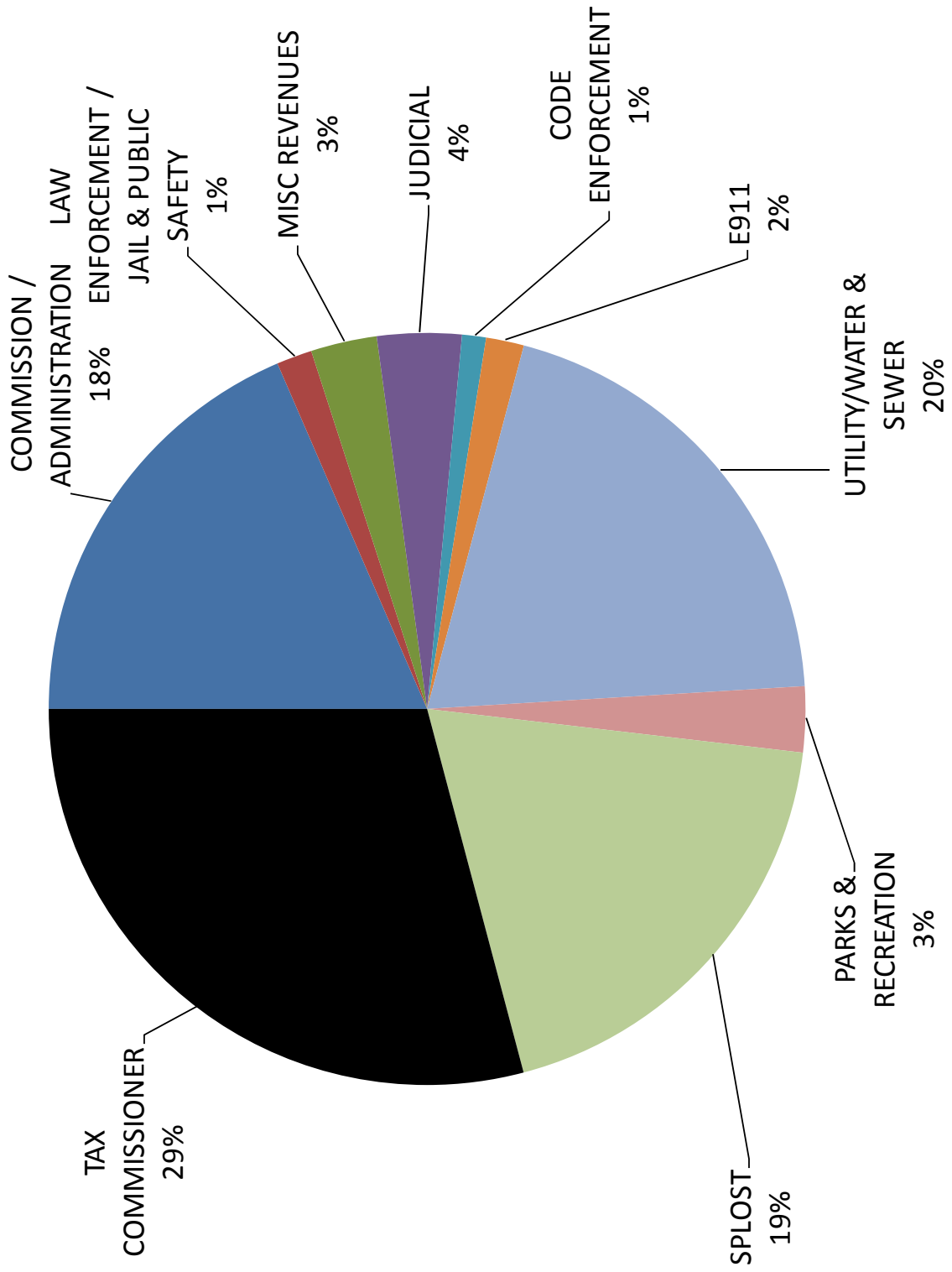
[In FY12 For Every \\$100 in Property Taxes, You Paid.....](#)



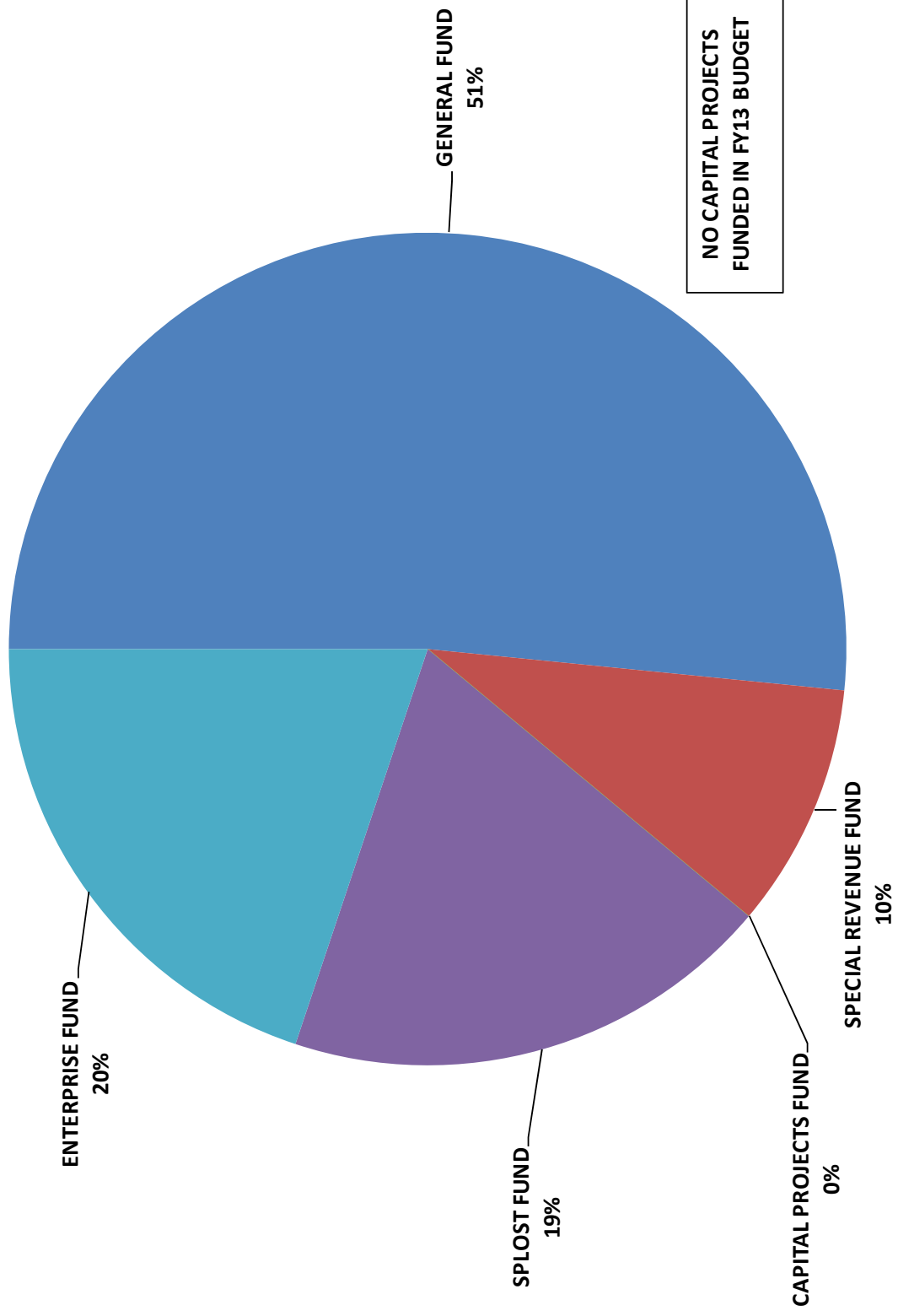
Unaudited



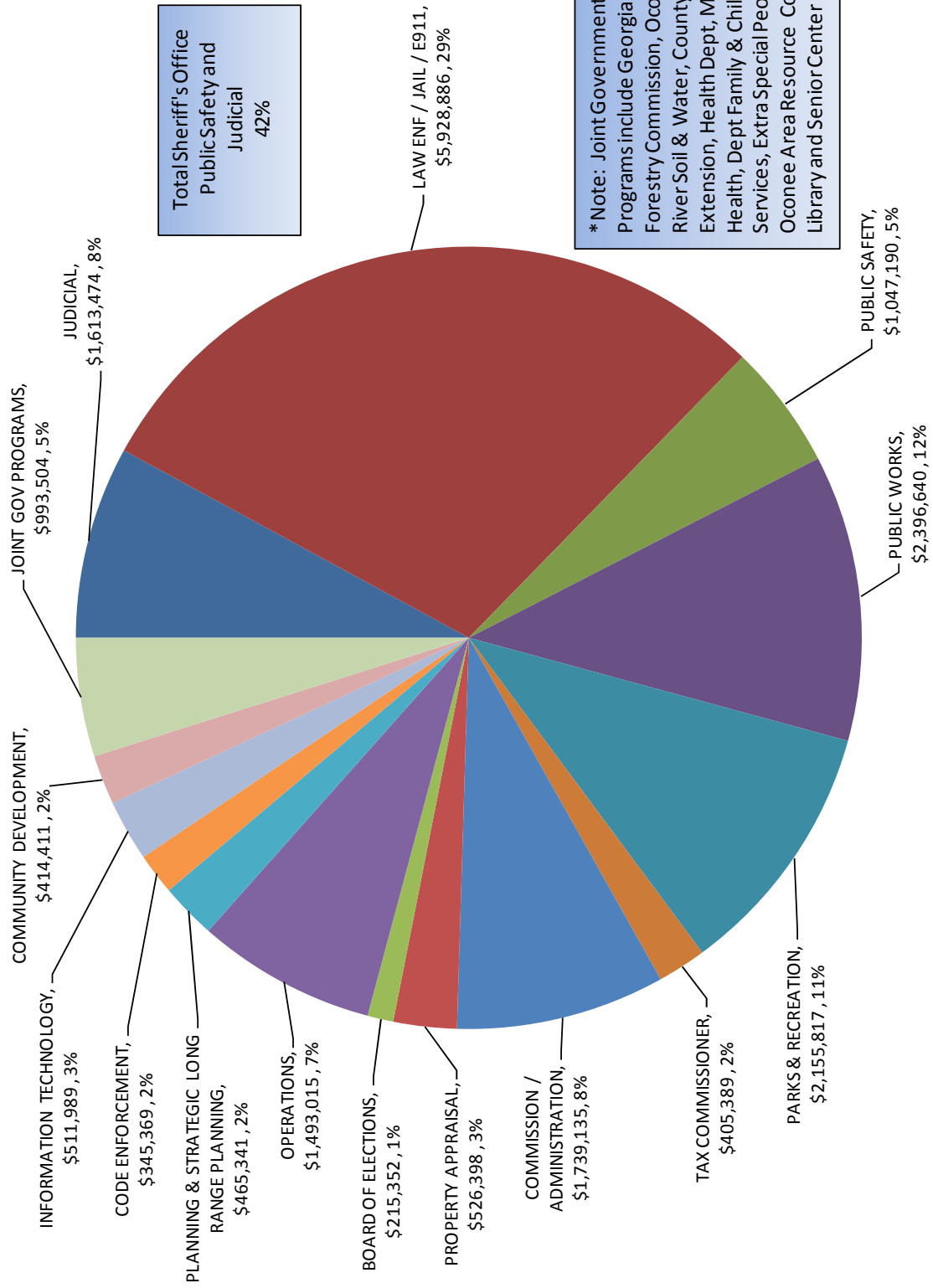
# FY13 BUDGET - ALL REVENUES - \$36,408,656



# FY13 BUDGET - ALL EXPENDITURES - \$36,408,656



# FY13 BUDGET – GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES - \$20,251,910





### **Board of Commissioners**

Melvin Davis, Chairman

Jim Luke, Post 1

John Daniell, Post 2

Margaret Hale, Post 3

Chuck Horton, Post 4

### **Constitutional Officers**

David Anglin, Probate Judge

Scott Berry, Sheriff

Harriette Browning, Tax Commissioner

Angela Watson, Clerk of Courts

### **Elected Officials**

Lawton Stephens, Chief Judge

Patrick Haggard, Judge

David Sweat, Judge

Ken Mauldin, District Attorney

Ed Carson, Coroner

*Year in Review*

*Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2012*