

# OCONEE COUNTY

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW



**Fiscal Year Ending 6/30/13**

# **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 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, from our Elected Officials and County Departments. Many positive activities occurred within the county over the course of the past year. We are happy to share these highlights through this *Year In Review*.

Changes occurred within county departments during this fiscal year. The Code Enforcement and Planning Departments were consolidated. Additionally, Jennifer Riddle began work as Oconee County's new Tax Commissioner. The Tax Commissioner's Office also experienced significant changes as the state legislature enacted a law changing the "birthday tax" for automobile tags. This is further explained in the Tax Commissioner's section of this *Year In Review*.

The Mars Hill Road Widening project is on track. Oconee County acquired most of the necessary rights-of-way as of the end of Fiscal Year 2013. However, a few parcels do remain, which we expect to acquire by December 2013. The Georgia DOT has informed the County that the construction contract is scheduled to be let during early 2014. Construction is expected to take two years.

Caterpillar is now operational. In just over one year, Caterpillar decided to build a facility here, built the building, and began operations. Additionally, the Epps Bridge Centre opened University 16 Cinemas amidst continued construction of the shopping center. Numerous retailers will open during the fall of 2013.

This year also marked the construction of the Farmington fire station, a prototype facility for future Oconee County fire stations. The station is located very close to the former Farmington station and has the capacity to house career firefighters, if and when circumstances warrant a paid department. Both current and future fire service needs in the south end of Oconee County will be served with the new station.

I trust that this *Year in Review* will provide you with facts and information that help you know more about your Oconee County. Feel free to visit our website for more information, or call me 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  
Mark Saxon, Commissioner – Post 4



## THE FUTURE

### **MARS HILL WIDENING (PHASE I)**

Right-of-way acquisition for the project is nearing completion. During FY14, all rights-of-ways will be fully acquired. Oconee County is expecting the Department of Transportation to let the construction contract during 2014. A two-year construction timeline has been estimated, with this phase spanning from GA 316 to Butler's Crossing.

### **UTILITIES**

For FY14, the Oconee County Utility Department plans to extend water mains along Elder Road and Whippoorwill Road. Additionally, construction of Phases I and II of the McNutt Creek Sanitary Sewer Extension project are expected to begin within the coming months.

### **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Property will be acquired for the addition of a new fire station along Barnett Shoals Road. The county has done its due diligence for the property and will purchase the property during FY14. Additionally, the new Farmington fire station is expected to open in October of 2013.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION**

Some of the projects being undertaken during FY14 include adding a net and shade protective covering for the youth baseball/softball fields, recoating the tennis courts and completing the walking trail at Oconee Veterans Park. Notification of the public during emergency weather issues will be planned during FY14. Sewer installation plans are in the works for the Bogart Sports Complex.

### **COURTHOUSE**

Parking at the Oconee County Courthouse is at a premium, especially on days when multiple courts are in session. The facility that recently housed the Cooperative Extension Program was removed from the property last year in order to make room for additional parking spaces. Funds have been allocated by the Board of Commissioners to increase the amount of parking at the Courthouse to better align the parking needs with the facility's expected uses.

### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

I.T. is working on installing credit card terminals at both Oconee County Libraries. The project is expected to be completed early in FY14 and other county departments may follow suit by installing terminals for credit card use at their facilities.



## THE ECONOMY

Economic development activities within Oconee County continued to rebound during Fiscal Year 2013. Not only did the tide turn in regards to new business activity, but the number of housing starts within the community rebounded dramatically as well. While the prior fiscal year ended with significant projects beginning or being announced, FY13 saw several of these come to fruition.

Caterpillar officially moved into their new facility straddling the Oconee/Athens-Clarke County line in March, with construction taking about one year. Not only has the facility been completed, but the company started hiring, closing FY13 with over 200 employees and employment seemingly increasing on a weekly basis. The company also initiated the first trial assembly of a mini-hydraulic excavator. The first excavators to officially come off the assembly line will be built by the fourth quarter of 2013.

Epps Bridge Centre also made significant progress over the past year. The 486,000 square foot shopping center was highlighted by the opening of the University 16 Cinemas on June 14, 2013. The list of tenants that will begin opening retail operations at the development during the fall of 2013 is growing, with confirmed retailers including Old Navy, Gap, Banana Republic, PetSmart, Dick's Sporting Goods, Pier One, Guitar World, Lifeway Christian Bookstores, Off Broadway, Ulta Cosmetics, Five Below, Sleep Number, Vitamin World and others.

The medical corridor along Hwy. 316 continues to grow. Several medical office buildings were constructed and numerous practices occupied locations within the corridor during the last year. This medical activity has been growing for several years and included expansions, relocations, and new practices. At the end of FY13, Resurgence Park was announced near the intersection of the Oconee Connector, Virgil Langford Road, and Hwy. 316. Further, additional medical offices were seen in the Virgil Langford Road and Hog Mountain Road corridors.

During June 2013, the Oconee County Industrial Development Authority (OCIDA) agreed to sell approximately 12 acres to Rooker Company for construction of two 35,000 square foot buildings on the property. Rooker will be working to locate a company into these facilities. Construction of the facilities is anticipated to begin in the fall of 2013.

New business activity was seen throughout all portions of the community. From Stripling's General Store on Hwy. 78, to Peach State Pride in downtown Watkinsville, to the aforementioned medical offices along Hwy. 316, business activity was seen throughout all parts of the community.





# OCONEE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

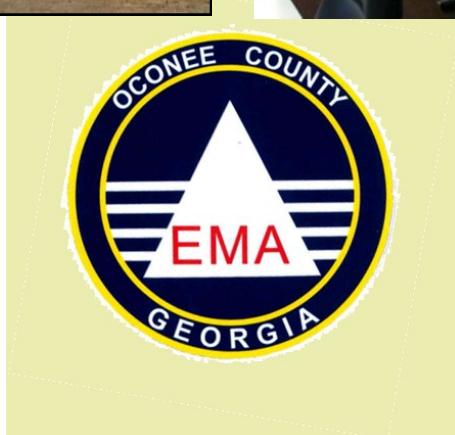
## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY 2012-2013



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 EMA 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.

In the past year, there were three separate incidents of individuals lost or injured at Heritage Park. As a result, Oconee County EMA organized a multi-agency tabletop exercise involving the rescue of lost, missing or injured individuals at the park. Many different ideas and solutions were derived from this exercise which will better prepare personnel for any similar events in the future. This fall, plans are to incorporate what was developed in the tabletop exercise into a live "boots-on-the-ground" drill at the park.





# OCONEE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES 2012-2013



Oconee County Fire Rescue provides Medical First Responder services to the citizens of the county with six rescue trucks and one mass casualty truck. These services are provided by 93 volunteer medically trained fire rescue personnel with an average response time of 6.8 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 September 2013, Oconee County Fire Rescue will begin another Medical First Responder class and train additional volunteers to respond to medical emergencies in the community.

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

- 56 First Responders – over 80 hours training
- 34 EMTs – over 400 hours training
- 3 Paramedics – over 1000 hours training
- 18 – Registered for First Responder training

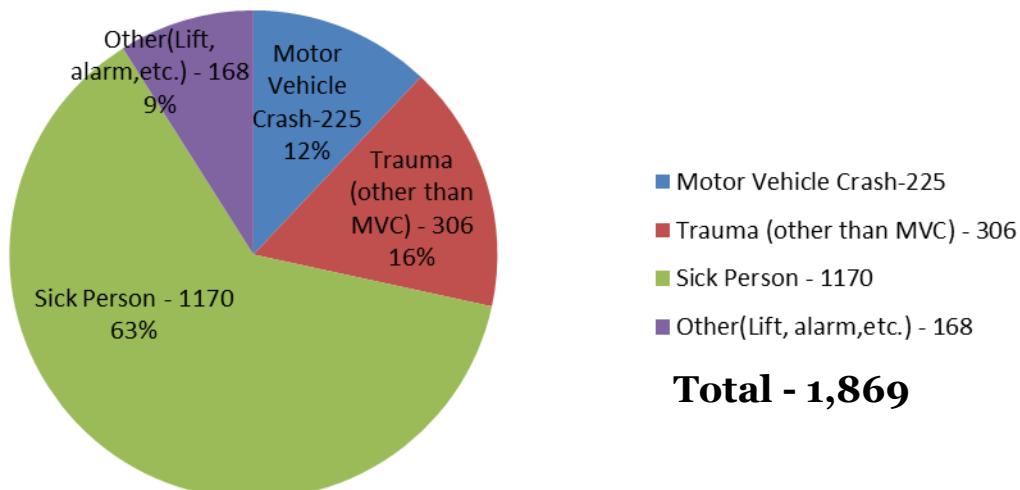


### Total Emergency Medical Responses

**2007 – 1,759  
2008 – 1,804  
2009 – 1,852  
2010 – 1,821  
2011 – 1,851  
2012 – 1,869**



### Total Emergency Medical Responses July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013





## OCONEE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE



### FIRE DEPARTMENT JULY 2012-JUNE 2013

Oconee County Fire Rescue (OCFR) 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 167 Volunteer Firefighters and Medical Responders with an average response time of 7.1 minutes.

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

In September 2012, OCFR was evaluated by Insurance Services Organization. Oconee County kept the ISO Class 5/9 rating by maintaining excellent fire apparatus, equipment, and well-trained volunteer firefighters along with outstanding 911 communications and water supply. **OCFR is the only countywide all-volunteer fire service that has an ISO Class 5/9 fire rating in Georgia.**

#### 167 Oconee County Fire Rescue Personnel

- **112 National Certified Firefighters**
- **27 State Certified Firefighters**
- **9 Registered for Firefighter 1 Training**
- **101 First Responder or EMT Certified**
- **147 Hazardous Material Certified**
- **121 Vehicle Extrication Certified**

#### Total Fire Responses

(By Calendar Year)

2003: 684	2008: 801
2004: 795	2009: 747
2005: 750	2010: 814
2006: 787	2011: 764
2007: 903	<b>2012: 730</b>



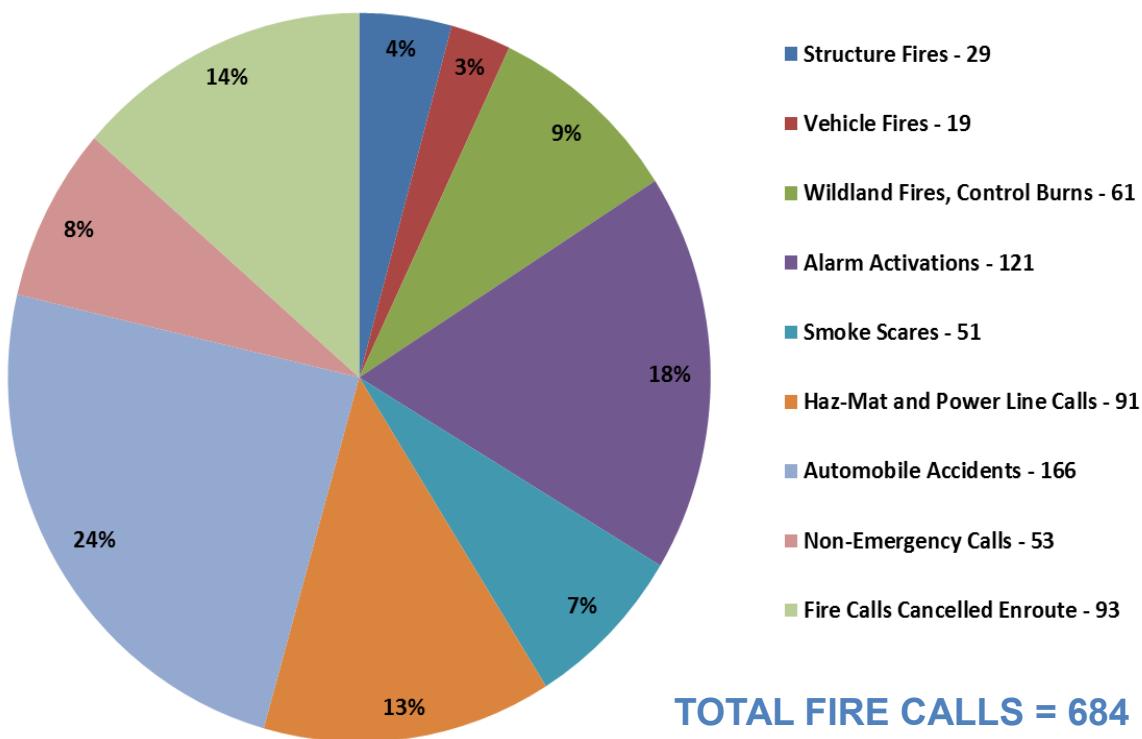
**Ladder 1**



**Fire Prevention in  
Oconee Schools K – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grades**

# OCONEE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

## Total Fire Rescue Responses July 2012 - June 2013



**New Fire Station 2**  
**2590 Old Farmington Road**  
**Built with SPLOST Funds**

# OCONEE COUNTY LIBRARIES

The Oconee County Library and Bogart Public Library are funded by four local agencies: Oconee County Board of Commissioners, Oconee County School District, City of Watkinsville, and City of Bogart.

## Oconee County Libraries By The Numbers:

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
# Visitors (Door Count)	293,946	241,524	231,213
# Checkouts	259,454	256,635	253,097
# Children's Programs Offered	536	364	320
# Children Attending Programs	15,905	17,117	16,258
# Children in Summer Reading Program	1,860	1,885	2,063
# Reference Questions Answered	54,612	84,668	77,626
# Meetings Booked in Public Meeting Rooms	390	485	491
# Computer Sessions Used	66,200	56,084	52,497
# New Library Cards Issued	1,132	1,233	1,060
Total Expenditures	\$428,409	\$413,157	\$408,163
# Employees (FTE)	11.5	9.8	9.8
# Registered Borrowers	17,259	18,492	14,805

### FY12-FY13 Comparisons:

Although there was a 1.4% decrease in checkouts and a 14% decrease in new library cards issued over the past fiscal year, this trend can be attributed to visitors utilizing the library's online resources at their own convenience. E-Book circulation was up 70% from FY12 and Wi-Fi usage increased by 38%. During FY13, patrons borrowed and returned 102,012 items from PINES libraries outside Oconee County.

### FY13 Highlights:

The Oconee County Library Board prepared a Strategic Plan for 2013-2018 which can be accessed on the library's website at [www.athenslibrary.org/oconee](http://www.athenslibrary.org/oconee). Through a donation of the Rotary Club of Oconee County, eReaders (Kindles) and MP3 players are available to check out at both libraries. Oconee County Library Friends' annual used book sale allowed them to donate \$26,000 to the Oconee County Library. New books, DVDs, and books on CD were among the items purchased.

The late, beloved local author Julie L. Cannon shared her novel *TWANG* with 60 of her fans at the Oconee County Library on August 12, 2012. The library staff was privileged to host her for what no one could know was her last author talk. She unexpectedly passed away on October 9, 2012.



## PARKS & RECREATION

### Discover The Benefits!



Our health, our community, our economy and our environment all benefit from investments in parks and recreation opportunities. Oconee County parks are such a stable influence on our lives that we tend not to give them much thought. But effective parks and recreation facilities do not just happen on their own. They require professional care and financial support to keep them clean, safe, and programmed suitably for the community they serve.

### **FY13 Activity Summary**

The Oconee County Parks and Recreation Department continues to strive for excellence in youth sports supported by its National Alliance for Youth Sports Community partnership. During FY13, this partnership provided 467 facility and field rentals, over 4,500 annual program participants and an estimated 9,000 special programs and community event participants. Parks facilities saw 37,000 annual day trips to the fitness center, open gym and indoor walking track with over 2,200 active memberships. The Oconee 4<sup>th</sup> of July Spectacular, Movie in the Park, the circus, softball tournaments, Little League District tournaments, soccer tournaments, mountain bike and cross country races and 5k road races were all hosted within the parks with an estimated \$500,000 economic impact.

FY13 was the most active year of OCPRD in over 28 years of service to the citizens of Oconee County. These numbers do not even take account of the daily passive use of county parks for walking, running, horseback riding, picnics, bark park visits and playground use or event spectators. Oconee County continues to be ranked as one of the healthiest communities in the state due to the activity level of our citizens. Recreational outlets are vital for healthy living, equating to a higher quality of life.

OCPRD and its programs create an environment for meaningful leisure activities providing citizens with public land and safe open spaces to recreate, which is an important index in a community's quality of life. The benefits of recreation are endless and what makes Oconee County: A great place to live, work and play!

### **Parks**

- 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, 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 trail, playground, picnic shelters and a dog park.
- Bogart Sports Complex offers six lighted baseball and multipurpose fields, walking trail, two playgrounds, and a picnic shelter.
- Heritage Park offers a large open arena, feeder barn, features 10 miles of bike trails and 4 miles of equestrian trails and over 364 acres of natural resources!

## **PARKS & RECREATION**

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

#### **Special Events & Tournaments**

- Oconee 4<sup>th</sup> of July Spectacular Fireworks Show and family event with over 8,000 in attendance.
- Punt, Pass, and Kick was held on September 8, 2012 with 42 participants.
- The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Touch-a-Truck event was held March 1, 2013 at Heritage Park with over 600 in attendance. Twenty-five different vehicles were on hand for the families to enjoy.
- Pitch, Hit, and Run was held on April 20, 2013, at the Bogart Sports Complex with 40 participants.
- The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Movie in the Park was held on May 11, 2013 at Oconee Veterans Park with over 500 in attendance on a rain soaked night.
- Hosted the annual Fast Pitch Softball Showcase Tournament with more than 73 college coaches in attendance and teams from 13 states as far away as Illinois, New Jersey and Minnesota participating.

#### **Programs**

- An average of 2,000 people used the fitness area per month. The indoor walking track and open gymnasium averaged 1,000 people per month.
- Fall programs such as Tackle Football, Flag Football, Soccer, and Cheerleading had over 1,300 participants enrolled.
- The winter season had over 700 young people and adults participate in Basketball programs.
- Spring soccer had over 850 participants enrolled with 96 teams.
- This spring there were 117 participants enrolled in various programs such as Homeschool PE, Volleyball, Start Smart Baseball, and Yoga.
- Over 340 adults participated in the spring season of Adult Softball with 23 teams.
- The After School program for 2012-2013 had an average of 160 participants. Teen Extreme had 20 participants enrolled.
- Summer Day Camp was at full capacity with 170 participants.
- Over 27 Summer Sports Camps were offered with over 550 participants enrolled.

#### **Volunteers**

**OPCRD appreciates the many volunteer coaches who work with our programs throughout the year. It is estimated over 17,000 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 \$319,000.00 dollars the county has saved by having great volunteers!**

- 240 volunteer coaches donated 8,000 volunteer hours of service to Fall youth programs.
- In the winter season, the Parks Department had 81 volunteer coaches who donated more than 3,000 hours of services towards various recreational programs.
- More than 160 volunteer coaches in the spring donated 6,000 hours of service to the youth programs offered.

#### **Departmental Awards**

- 2012 GRPA State Volunteer of the Year – Jamie Wiedeman
- 2012 GRPA State Publication Award for OCPRD Quarterly Program Brochure

# SENIOR CENTER

Focused on enriching the quality of life for older adults within the community, the dedicated staff at the Oconee County Senior Center provides seniors age 60 or over with access to a wide range of services and programs throughout the year. The Senior Center served around 300 different seniors this past fiscal year, including the provision of approximately 6,000 home delivered meals and 8,000 congregate meals to these individuals. Through its partnerships with local businesses, healthcare facilities, and volunteer organizations, the Senior Center seeks to actively promote senior participation in all aspects of the community. The programs and services offered by the Senior Center help ensure that seniors in the community have the highest quality of life possible.

## Senior Citizen Activities During FY13

### Consumer

- AARP Snap Outreach
- Lap Top Tune up
- Ga. Legal Services Seminar
- Ga. Cares Services
- Energy Assistance
- Medicare Updates
- Host NEGA AAA Public Hearing
- Georgia Telecommunication Seminar

### Health

- Nutrition Classes by UGA
- Blood Pressure Clinics
- Home Health Programs
- AAA-Stress Relief Programs
- Health Fairs

### Fitness

- Zumba Gold Classes
- Chair Zumba Classes
- Senior Stretch
- Walking Program
- Yoga Classes

### Classes

- Computer Instruction
- Craft
- Sewing
- Knitting
- Ballroom Dance
- Line Dance
- Drawing
- Art

### Trips

- Star Spangled Senior Celebration
- Red Hat Club
- Birthday Parties
- Sing-alongs
- Bingo
- Luau
- Halloween Party
- Thanksgiving Luncheon
- Christmas Party
- Grace Temple Choir Concert
- Valentine Party
- Sweetheart Dance
- Piano Concert by Jim Sherman
- Iris Place Luncheon
- St. Patrick's Day Party
- Cinco de Mayo Party
- Memorial Day Open House
- Easter Hat Parade
- Dances

### Local Partners and Volunteers

- Trader Joe's
- Wal-Mart
- Publix
- Rose Society
- Master Gardner's
- Oconee Co. 4-H Club
- Oconee Co. Council on Aging
- ARMC Home Health
- St. Mary's Home Health



## PROPERTY APPRAISAL

During FY13, the number of housing sales increased in Oconee County for the second consecutive year. Oconee County's residential sales have seen drastic growth over the past year, a trend that can be attributed to a rebounding economy. There were 60.1 percent more houses sold in Oconee County during 2012 than 2011. However, the average sales price decreased by \$32,542, or 11.56 percent from 2011 to 2012.

The Property Appraisal Office has a difficult charge as 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
2001	129	\$293,259.00	352	\$189,130.00	481	\$217,056.49
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>31</b>	<b>\$329,122.00</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>\$258,356.00</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>\$267,574.00</b>
<b>2011*</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>\$300,998.00</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>\$275,279.00</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>\$281,491.00</b>
<b>2012*</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>\$281,176.00</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>\$239,913.00</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>\$248,949.00</b>

\*These values were compiled from **Fair Market Value sales only**. **2012 sales are through 12/31/2012**. New sales include 2011 and 2012 year built. Custom built homes not sold on the open market are **not** included.

In FY13, there were 325 appeals filed where property owners contested the assessment of their property's fair market value.

## **TAX COMMISSIONER**

The Tax Commissioner's Office saw many changes during FY13. Jennifer Riddle was elected as the county's new Tax Commissioner in November 2012 and came into the office of Tax Commissioner with 19 years of tax experience. So far, she has addressed several challenges which have come up since her term began.

A new Title Ad Valorem Tax went into effect in March of this year. The Tax Commissioner's Office held a public forum in February at the Oconee Civic Center in order to educate the public on its guidelines and implications. With the new law came some major changes in the way the office handled customers. One of the most noticeable is that the time required to be spent with each customer has increased as a result of the new regulations. The office staff is working promptly on this issue to ensure that the line flows as smoothly as possible.

During FY13, the Tax Commissioner's Office completed several projects which helped increase workplace efficiency. Perhaps the biggest change that occurred was the addition of credit/debit machines. This has been warmly received by Oconee County residents as they have more flexibility in regards to their payment options. Currently, the office is working with Official Payments at the state level to have online payments for tag renewals.

As a point of pride, Oconee County's Tax Commissioner's Office receives several calls each week from other counties. Oconee County's peer communities have recognized the work and knowledge of the staff, which is evidenced by their calls. This is a great testament to the dedicated employees of Oconee County.

<b>TAX COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE DATA- FY13</b>	
<b>Tag Registrations Issued</b>	35,758
<b>Ad Valorem</b> collected for Vehicles for County purposes	\$1,315,317
<b>Ad Valorem</b> collected for Vehicles for School purposes	\$2,807,307
<b>Tax Parcels</b> for tax year 2012	17,316
<b>Property Tax</b> collected for County purposes - Current Year	\$8,646,238
<i>(Property tax includes: mobile homes, timber, public utilities, not on digest)</i>	
<b>Property Tax</b> collected for County purposes - Prior Years	\$98,475
<i>(Prior years tax consists of tax collected in 2010 and prior years.)</i>	
<b>Property Tax</b> collected for School purposes - Current Year	\$22,300,854
<b>Property Tax</b> collected for School Purposes - Prior Years	\$239,152
<i>(Prior years tax consists of tax collected in 2010 and prior years.)</i>	

## ANIMAL CONTROL

Oconee County's Animal Control Department oversees the shelter and enforces the county's ordinances. At the end of FY13, the shelter had impounded 923 animals and 101 pets were returned to their owners. The facility is dependent upon volunteers to ensure the care of the animals and cleaning of the kennel and cattery. During the year, there were 367 people who donated their time and energy. With the help of volunteers, it aids the staff to operate and maintain the shelter's extremely high levels of service, cleanliness, and provides the animals with love and support. The shelter can never have too many volunteers. Unfortunately, volunteer numbers dropped by 91 from the previous year.

Animal Control's mission is to assist, protect, and educate the public on animal care, animal welfare issues, and to enforce the County's Animal Control Ordinance.

Activities for the past 7 years are displayed below:

YEAR	VISITORS	CALLS	ADOPT	AGENCY	RTO	SURR	1079	INTAKE
<b>2007</b>	2,439	21,567	239	130	164	161	638	1,393
<b>2008</b>	2,323	41,150	222	195	185	103	785	1,631
<b>2009</b>	1,685	59,108	179	225	139	148	777	1,515
<b>2010</b>	1,594	60,709	169	216	155	153	671	1,388
<b>2011</b>	1,428	73,782	122	282	184	291	579	1,148
<b>2012</b>	1,659	50,123	77	236	128	173	401	878
<b>2013</b>	1,876	46,959	126	226	101	157	461	923
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,004</b>	<b>353,398</b>	<b>1,134</b>	<b>1,510</b>	<b>1,056</b>	<b>1,186</b>	<b>4,312</b>	<b>8,876</b>

Visitors - # of Visitors to Shelter  
Calls - # of Calls Received at Shelter  
Adopt - # of Animals Adopted from Shelter  
Agency - Transfers  
RTO - Returned to Owner  
Surr- # of Animals Surrendered to Shelter

1079 - Euthanized  
Intake - Impounded



## CIVIC CENTER

The mission of the Oconee County Civic Center is to provide high quality meeting and performance space for a variety of public, private and school system related functions. The Civic Center seeks to provide full-service meeting, conference, recreational and cultural arts facilities. Use of the Civic Center is available to groups and individuals within and outside the county. By agreement with the Oconee County Board of Education, school events have scheduling priority.

Statistics for FY13 show a continuation of the same trend as in past years:

Total Rents and Royalties	\$115,603
Total Expenditures	\$385,030
Total Income	\$128,603
Total Events	413
School System Events	188
County Sponsored Events	80
All Other Events	145



### **Projects Undertaken:**

During the past year, the staff at the Civic Center replaced all stage masking curtains, installed a new audio/visual projection system, upgraded its WiFi hotspot capability and provided off-site sound reinforcement for six different countywide events.

### **New Initiatives:**

Initiatives for the coming year will primarily consist of planning a strategy for the long-term future of the Civic Center. FY13 will mark the 20th year that the Civic Center has been in operation. Due to some capacity concerns within the facility, potential growth opportunities have been discussed. Modifications to the present building may need to be considered in order to accommodate more people for future events.

Usage data for the Civic Center is shown below.

	<b>FY10</b>	<b>FY11</b>	<b>FY12</b>	<b>FY13</b>
<b># School System Events Hosted</b>	210	171	201	188
<b># County Government Events Hosted</b>	51	83	89	80
<b># Private Events Hosted</b>	138	140	143	145
<b># Total Events Hosted</b>	399	394	433	413

## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

**Oconee Co. Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent develops educational programs and responds to private citizens and commercial agri-businesses for problem solving and diagnosis purposes. In 2012-2013, the Extension Agent:**

- Submitted 500 soil, water, forage and microbiological specimens to UGA for laboratory analysis and diagnosed 400 plant diseases and insect damage samples
- Authored a regular column on issues facing homeowners and farmers for *The Oconee Enterprise*
- Served as an educational programming resource for the Clarke/Oconee Cattlemen's Association, Oconee County Chamber of Commerce Agribusiness Committee
- Provided recertification training for 105 private and commercial pesticide applicators
- Provided educational awareness programming for schools and community events
- Moved Oconee Co. Cooperative Extension to new location at the J. Phil Campbell Research and Education Center on Government Station Road in Watkinsville.



**Oconee County 4-H educates more than 700 youth. During the 2012-2013 4-H year:**

- Twelve members won a state championship and were named Master 4-Hers
- Three members served on and two members were elected to the Northeast District 4-H Board of Directors
- Nine were selected as 4-H camp counselors
- The Dairy Quiz Bowl team and Cotton Boll and Consumer Judging team won state championships
- One member performed and two new members were selected to perform with Clovers and Company, the Georgia 4-H statewide performing group
- Over \$2,500 was raised for Cancer Support by 4-H members
- 350 contacts were made through Project Achievement and Judging Events
- 211 attended Georgia 4-H educational camps and conferences
- Eleven members attended National 4-H competitions and conferences
- 8 youth competed in regional and state livestock shows
- Over 200 members participated in activities to benefit the community. Activities included cooking meals for foster families, visiting residents of local retirement homes, monthly road clean ups, collecting canned goods for ACTS, and sending cards to troops overseas.
- Over \$9,000 in 4-H and community scholarships were awarded to graduating seniors
- A total of 166 members served in leadership roles during monthly meetings

The **Family and Consumer Sciences Program** provided 40 nutrition and wellness programs, including Cancer Prevention Cooking Schools, Walk-a-Weigh Health and Fitness, and Power to Prevent Diabetes, helping **609 participants** adopt new habits, including making healthier food choices and increasing daily physical activity. They also provided 25 food safety and home food preservation programs, teaching **387 participants** safe food preparation and home food preservation practices.

## 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 6/30/2013</b>
<b>Full-Time</b>	229
<b>Part-Time</b>	36
<b>Seasonal</b>	33
<b>Elected Officials</b>	10
<b>Enterprise Fund (Utility Department)</b>	22
<b>Reimbursed to County</b>	9
<b>Board Members (Elections &amp; Assessors)</b>	9
<b>Bailiffs</b>	3
<b>Total Employment</b>	<b>351</b>

Oconee County launched the **Coast2Coast Discount Prescription Card Program** in July 2012. The program allows County residents, regardless of income, age, or health status to participate in the program and save on the cost of their medications. The Rx Discount Card is available free of charge and may be used at all pharmacy chains and most independent pharmacies in Oconee County. **The Coast2Coast Rx Card is available for residents at most participating pharmacies, governmental offices, libraries and County health facilities.** Residents may also print the Rx card and view the nearest participating locations at [www.coast2coastrx.com](http://www.coast2coastrx.com).

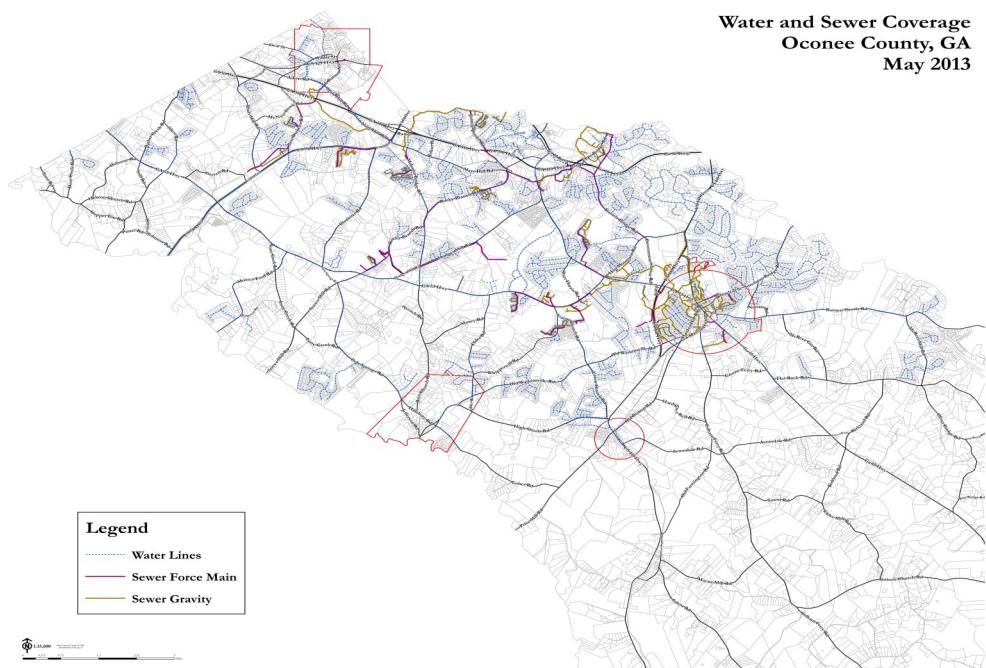


## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

The IT Department made improvements across the board during FY13 and began a number of projects that will continue to take shape throughout the upcoming year. Projects that took place during FY13 included upgrading the VoIP phone servers and adding VoIP phones and internet to the new Cooperative Extension location. Additionally, IT set up credit card terminals for Animal Control, Civic Center, Clerk of Courts, Landfill, Probate Court, Courtroom, Planning/Code Enforcement, and the Tax Commissioner's Office. Access points were set up for public use of the internet at the following facilities: the Courthouse, Oconee Veterans Park gymnasium, Oconee Veterans Park conference room and the Senior Center. IT is in the process of adding access points for the County Annex and the Cooperative Extension building within the next year. They also installed new elections software, barcode readers and scanners and Windows 7 software on all computers for the Board of Elections. IT is working hard at installing a new tool for remote desktop support and hope to see it come to fruition during the upcoming fiscal year.

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

With the rise of new business activity this past fiscal year, the GIS Department undertook a variety of projects aimed at providing enhanced site selection maps and data for various business ventures. GIS developed site selection maps and data for the Joint Development Authority for potential business development. Ongoing parcel, road, and general GIS data maintenance has taken place to promote business growth within the county. GIS also worked in conjunction with the Fire Department to design, print, and laminate hydrant fire station maps and provide updates to fire hydrant locations. Countywide school maps were created for both the Sheriff's Department and the Board of Education during the current school year. Voter registration was streamlined by updating polling precinct voter rolls for the Board of Elections and identifying registered voters by school district, a request made by the Board of Commissioners. Currently, GIS is working with the Sheriff's Office to develop emergency plan maps for all public and private schools within the county.



## OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES

The Operations and Facilities Department has 19 employees, which are responsible for the daily cleaning, maintenance, security, and administrative duties required by the county. Operations and Facilities strives to work in a timely, responsible and cost effective manner to ensure a safe, healthy, and pleasant working environment for employees and those doing business in county facilities.

In addition to normal day-to-day duties, Operations and Facilities completed a total of 975 work orders which consisted of various requests from departments within the county. Other duties include assisting in set-up for such events as the Christmas Parade, Fall Festival, Library Book Sale, and the polling locations for all county, state, and national elections.



Operations and Facilities employees work with outside vendors to bid and oversee a variety of projects. These projects include coordinating services like fire extinguisher inspections, sprinkler system inspections, range hood cleanings, pest control service, elevator maintenance, lawn maintenance and power outages. Additionally, Operations and Facilities works closely with all county department directors in acquiring quotes and pricing for budget preparation.

### **Ward Building-Operations and Facilities Office**

During FY13, the Department was involved in many projects. Some of the completed projects included the construction of the new storage building for the Oconee County Library, the exterior painting of the Civic Center, the William Daniell House repairs, Fire Station #1 floor repairs, Board of Elections renovations, USDA server room upgrade, 4-H relocation and demolition of their old building, roof repair at Calls Creek switchgear building, Heritage Park old school porch floor repairs, HVAC zoning work at the Senior Center, AC unit replacement at Eagle Tavern, upgrades to the Government Annex roadside sign, roof work and canopy replacement at the Government Annex, and removal and replacement of the tree at the front of the courthouse.

Projects for consideration during FY14 include Courthouse parking lot expansion, as well as various upgrades within the Courthouse. The Board of Elections has several items to be addressed, such as new carpet and VCT, and the installation of a heat pump. At the Government Annex location there are various projects that are expected to be completed. These include rear parking lot paving, re-carpeting in various areas, gutters and wall seepage repairs and exterior painting. At our Watkinsville Library, you will observe a new look due to the redesign of the landscaping and signage.



## PLANNING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT

The retirement of Code Enforcement Director, Steve Hansford, in August of 2012 brought a major change within the Planning and Code Enforcement Departments. The decision was made by the Oconee County Board of Commissioners to combine both departments into a single entity known officially as Planning and Code Enforcement (PACE). The combination made both fiscal and logistical sense.

Fiscally, the combination eliminated the need for two department heads to oversee a system of overlapping and cross-jurisdictional authority for codes associated with permitting and development. Logistically, both departments are housed in one building where a high level of interaction between employees was already a daily routine.

### **Planning Division:**

During the 2012-2013 year, the Planning staff responded to 4,142 telephone calls and provided assistance to 912 customers in the office to discuss land uses, zoning of properties, administrative subdivision plats, proposed development projects, and requirements of the Oconee County Unified Development Code.

The chart below presents the number and type of code-driven processes of standard review and approvals conducted by the department within the fiscal year.

<b>Accepted for Planning Commission:</b>	4 rezones, 3 special use/ CUPs
<b>Accepted for Development Review Committee (DRC):</b>	17 preliminary plat/site plans, 16 site development plans, 2 revised final plats
<b>Accepted for Review and Processing or Administrative Approval:</b>	76 administrative plats, 17 final plats, 18 sign application reviews with code enforcement
<b>Accepted for BOC:</b>	7 variances

As part of the County's new website format, the Planning Division web page has been enhanced with new features which include the ability to view online all upcoming rezone, variance, special use and UDC amendments. Updated regularly to provide the most current information available to the public, this web page has also been enhanced to include an indexed, searchable version of the Unified Development Code. All forms and applications for both Planning and Code Enforcement have been updated to reflect the current version of the Unified Development Code.

Four sets of amendments to the Unified Development Code were prepared by Planning staff and presented to the Board of Commissioners during the past fiscal year. The Unified Development Code is frequently reviewed and scrutinized for conflicts that may require changes by the Board of Commissioners.

Staff continues to provide routine services, in accordance with the Service Delivery Strategy and inter-governmental agreements, for the municipalities of Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals, and Watkinsville.

# PLANNING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT

## **Code Enforcement Division:**

The Code Enforcement Division promotes public safety and helps protect property rights by regulating and controlling the design, construction, occupancy, use, and location of facilities within unincorporated Oconee County. This is accomplished through the enforcement of construction codes, zoning laws, state and local litter laws, environmental laws, soil erosion ordinances, and other ordinances passed by the Oconee County Board of Commissioners.

Code Enforcement issues all commercial and residential building permits, 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.

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

Three employees were assigned specific roles as in-house experts in signage, commercial building inspections, and residential building inspections. The Fire Marshal attended the Georgia Fire Safety Symposium and was re-deputized as the Local Fire Marshal. During the fiscal year, he completed the following re-certifications: ICC Fire Inspector, ICC Residential Inspector, and ICC Building Inspector.

Code Enforcement is also responsible for registering and collecting occupation taxes. A total of 174 new occupation tax certificates were issued and 1,063 renewals were processed during FY13. The combined value of these certificates was \$112,511.

Building inspectors conducted 1,645 residential and 601 commercial building inspections. Additionally, staff conducted 3,889 inspections for soil erosion, with 32 violations and one Stop Work Order issued. Code Enforcement processed 174 complaints with 13 non-compliance orders. Two citations were issued for code violations, but most non-compliance issues were resolved prior to citations being necessary.

The chart below presents the number and type of permits issued by Code Enforcement during the fiscal year and the total value associated with each category.

<b>Permit Type</b>	<b>Number Issued</b>	<b>Total Value</b>
Single Family Residential Building	272	\$182,827.68
Commercial Building	84	\$179,341.61
Mobile Home	5	\$1,014.86
Miscellaneous	270	\$26,902.31
Sign Permits	75	—
Logging and Hauling	22	—

## PUBLIC WORKS

### Major Transportation Upgrades and Improvements:

Mars Hill Widening – Right-of-way acquisition activities began in February 2011. Near the close of FY13, the right-of-way acquisition was 70% complete. Anticipated completion is September 2013. Construction for Phase 1 of the Oconee Connector-Butler's Crossing corridor is estimated to cost around \$23 million and finish two years after start.

### Transportation Improvements and Maintenance (TIM) Plan:

The current TIM plan was adopted by the Board of Commissioners in January 2012 and covers FY13 and FY14. Funding for the TIM plan is received from SPLOST funds. Additional funds are provided by the Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG) through the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) with a 30% match from Oconee County. Repairs and resurfacing of roads as well as repairs to storm water conveyance systems were also performed as part of the TIM plan.

### Road Department:

The Road Department activities include repair and maintenance of paved and dirt roads, shoulders, ditches, signs, mowing, debris removal, and dead animal removal.

### Sanitation:

Total Number of Customers - 5 Collections Sites (Including Landfill)	55,935
Collection Site Customers - Disposal of Pay As You Throw Bags	28,225
Collection Site Customers - Disposing of Recycling	45,989
Bulk Solid Waste Disposal - 30-yard containers	424

## KEEP OCONEE COUNTY BEAUTIFUL COMMISSION



The Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission (KOCBC) is a certified affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, Inc. – [www.kab.org](http://www.kab.org). Their Mission is *“to increase citizen awareness of the need for individual environmental stewardship and to offer opportunities for public involvement in local projects.”* The Commission consists of twelve volunteer members appointed by the Board of Commissioners.

In FY13, in addition to their many successful projects like the *Great American Cleanup & Bring One for the Chipper* (Christmas tree recycling), KOCBC focused on setting new goals. This focus resulted in the adoption of a new logo, revision of the KOCBC mission statement, and adoption of new programs including the Adopt-A-Spot program and an Adult Education program that includes periodic columns in the Oconee Enterprise and workshops for the public on the best ways to reduce, reuse, recycle and keep Oconee County litter free.

For more information about KOCBC, please e-mail [ahelwig@oconee.ga.us](mailto:ahelwig@oconee.ga.us).

## UTILITIES

The contract for the construction and labor of the dam at Hard Labor Creek Reservoir has been bid. Road relocations for the project are underway and the majority of the necessary parcels have been acquired.

During FY13, the total **demand for water** in Oconee County was 812.991 million gallons. Of the total demand, 755.066 million gallons (92.9%) were purchased from Bear Creek Reservoir, 70.474 million gallons (8.7%) were produced by Oconee County wells, and 4.238 million gallons (<1%) were purchased from Barrow County. Additionally, 44.819 million gallons was purchased from Oconee County by Walton County under an agreement approved by the Board of Commissioners during FY13.

The average daily demand for water during FY13 was 2.23 million gallons per day compared to 2.82 million gallons per day used during FY12. A portion of this is likely attributed to the fact that FY13 saw more rainfall than FY12, meaning less water was used for landscaping purposes.

During FY13, **Oconee County received 47.15 inches of rain**. The two months which saw the heaviest rainfall were February at 6.25 inches and June at 10 inches. The average rainfall during the month of June in the Oconee region is 4.18 inches, making it one of the wettest June months on record. The total rainfall for FY13 eclipsed last year's total by 15.7 inches but did not surpass the FY11 rainfall which reached 52.4 inches.

Over **92 million gallons of wastewater was treated** during FY13 by OCUD. There were 56.420 million gallons treated at Calls Creek WRF, while 36.50 million gallons were treated at the Rocky Branch LAS facility. During FY13, daily treatment of wastewater totaled **254,575 gallons**.

### OCUD Summary for FY11-FY13

	2011	2012	2013
Water Customers	8690	8803	9093
Sewer Customers	1455	1534	1638
Total Water Mains (miles)	285	285	286
Water Mains Replaced (miles)	0	1.2	0
Total Sewer Mains (miles)	73.33	73.33	73.33
Sewer Mains Replaced (miles)	0	1.1	0
Base Residential Rate (water)	\$18.00	\$19.00	\$19.00
Base Commercial Rate (water)	\$18.00	\$19.00	\$19.00
# Radio Read Meters Replaced	2460	1400	1800
Unaccounted for Water (%)	4	4	4



## OCONEE COUNTY FY13 BY THE NUMBERS



**367**

People who volunteered at Animal Control



**975**

Work orders completed by Operations and Facilities

**6,000**

One way trips provided by the Senior Center



**413**

Events hosted by the Civic Center



Credit: Rebecca McCarthy



**3,000**

Seating capacity at University 16 Cinemas, Oconee County's first commercial theater



**253,097**

Books checked out at Oconee County libraries



**1,869**

Total emergency medical responses by EMS



Credit: Stephanie Gross

**83**

New houses built in Oconee County, 26 more than FY12



Credit: Stephanie Gross

**174**

New business licenses issued



**7.1**

Average response time in minutes of trained fire rescue personnel



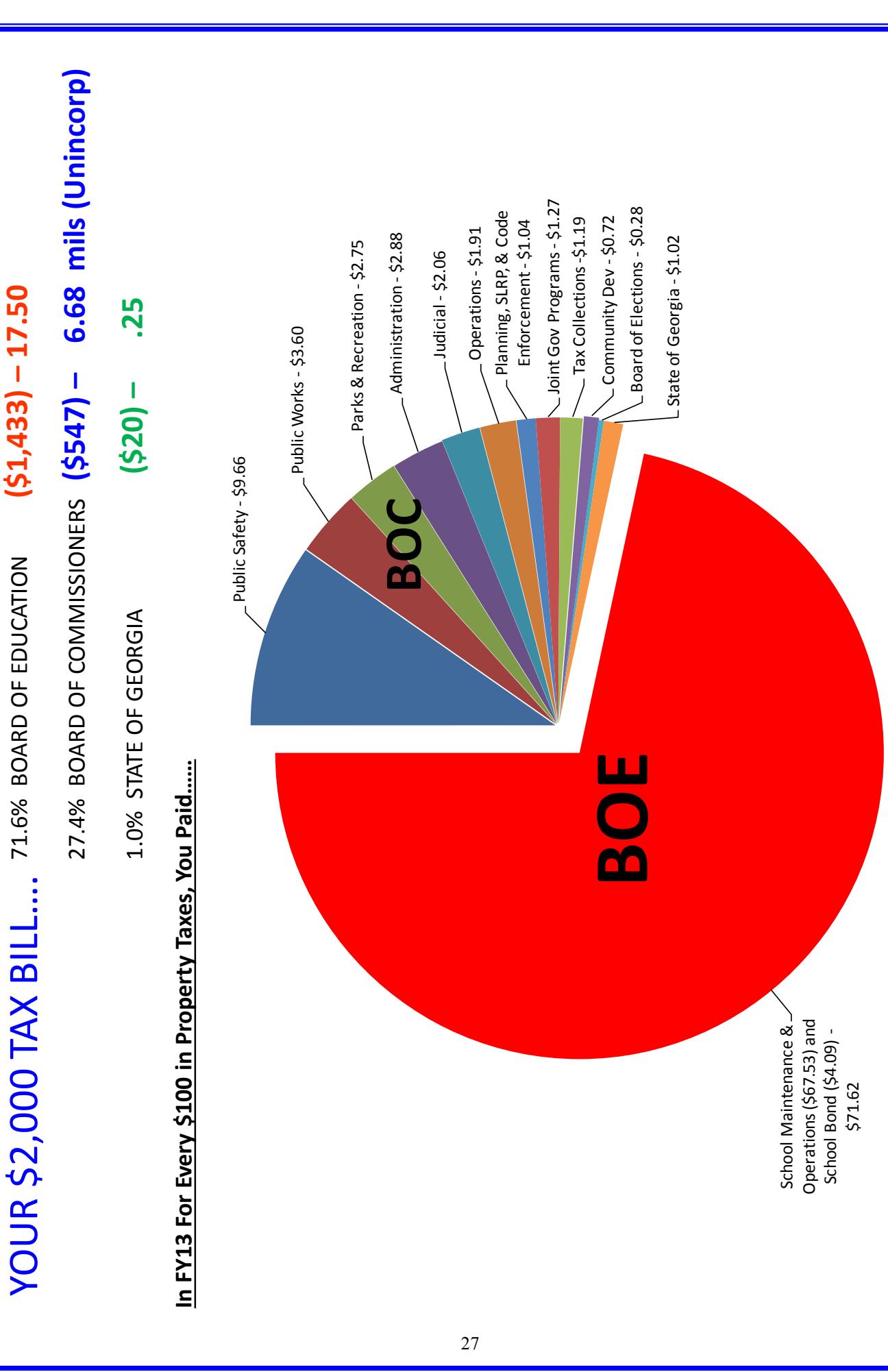
**4,500**

Total youth involved in sports programs provided by Parks & Rec

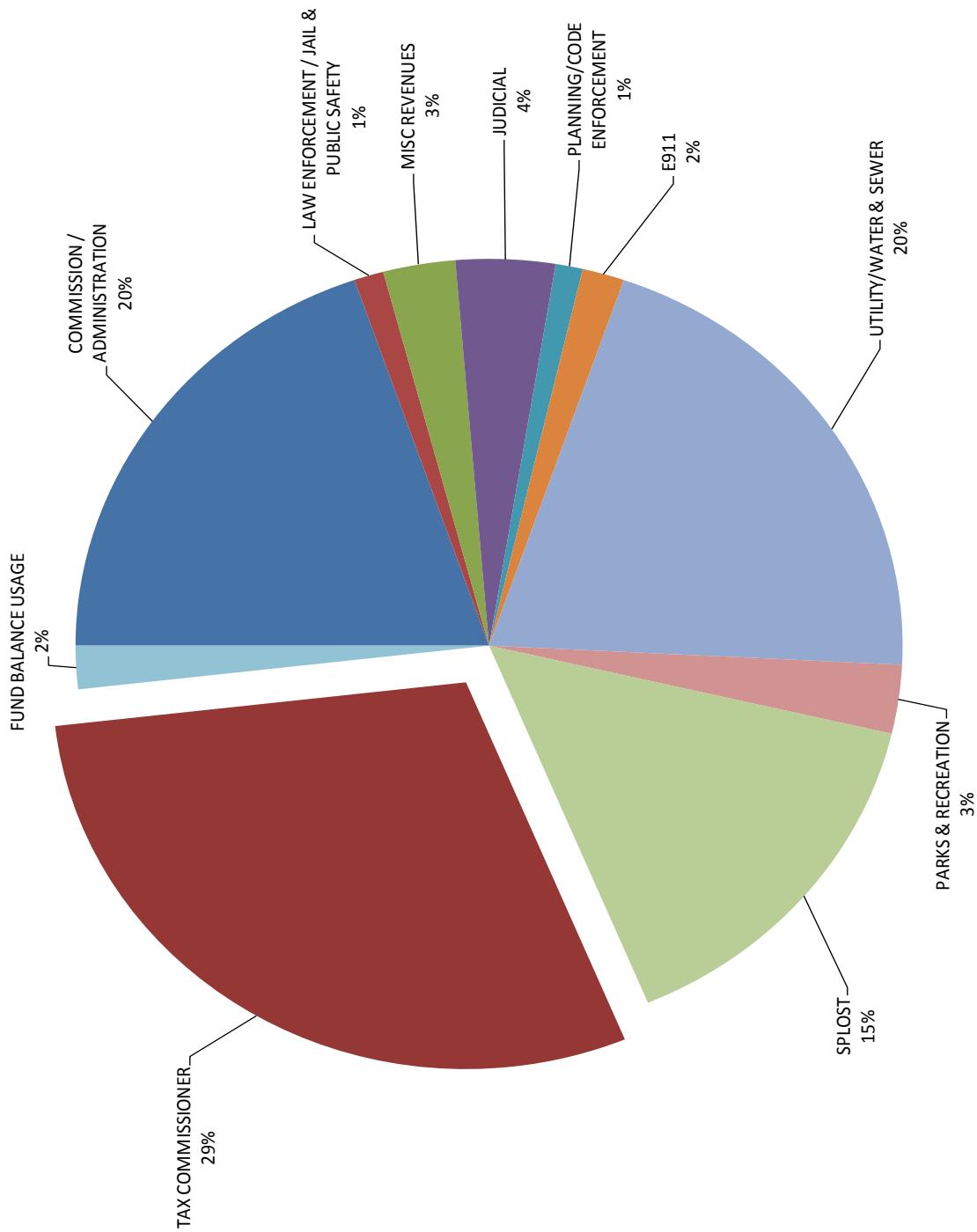


**394**

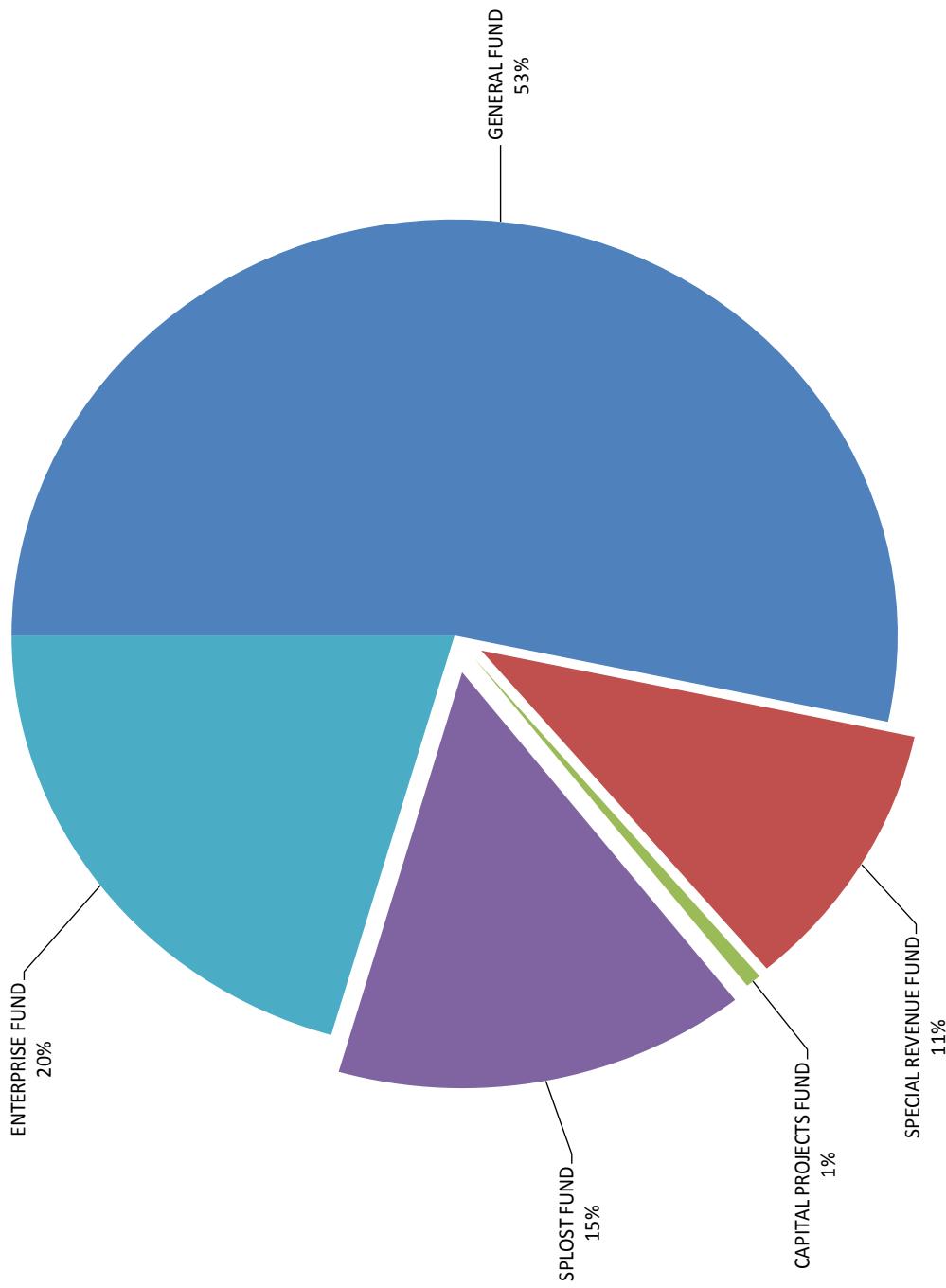
New water and sewer customers



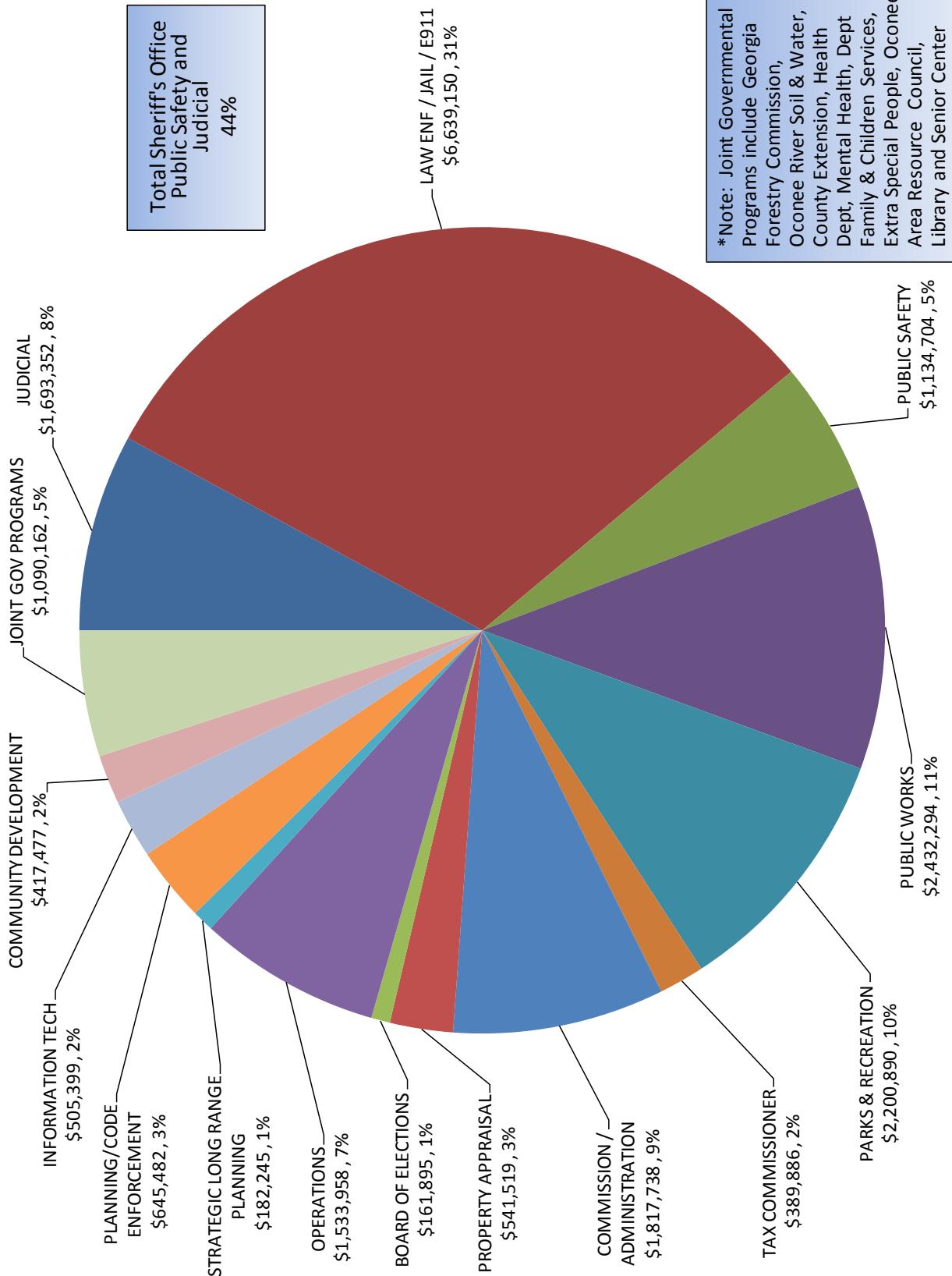
# FY14 Budget - All Revenues - \$36,290,100



# FY14 Budget - All Expenditures - \$36,290,100



# FY14 Budget - General Fund Expenditures



\*Note: Joint Governmental Programs include Georgia Forestry Commission, Oconee River Soil & Water, County Extension, Health Dept, Mental Health, Dept Family & Children Services, Extra Special People, Oconee Area Resource Council, Library and Senior Center



### **Board of Commissioners**

Melvin Davis, Chairman

Jim Luke, Post 1

John Daniell, Post 2

Margaret Hale, Post 3

Mark Saxon, Post 4

### **Constitutional Officers**

David Anglin, Probate Judge

Scott Berry, Sheriff

Jennifer Riddle, Tax Commissioner

Angela Watson, Clerk of Courts

### **Elected Officials**

David Sweat, Chief Judge

Patrick Haggard, Judge

Lawton Stephens, Judge

Ken Mauldin, District Attorney

Ed Carson, Coroner

*Year in Review  
Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2013*