



gwinnettcounty
GEORGIA

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OFFICE OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
ANNUAL REPORT

Board of Commissioners



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Letter from the Director



We have a plan, we have trained, we have the resources, and we are ready.

It is my pleasure to share a year-end summary of activities and accomplishments of the Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management for 2016. Highlights include:

- Hosted a National Level Exercise with FEMA
- Received two Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties
- Developed a new search team for critical missing persons incidents
- Coordinated the provision of mutual aid to Georgia's coastal community during Hurricane Matthew
- Oversaw response to human and facility related conditions associated with the 2016 elections

Our successes are due to strong partnerships and active collaboration throughout the community. Public and individual preparedness is vital to Gwinnett's resilience. Our staff and partners worked diligently this year to improve Gwinnett County's ability to respond to, and recover from natural and man-made disasters, and I encourage all Gwinnett County residents to improve their individual and family readiness. In our complex and diverse environment, whole-community engagement is critical.

It is my honor to serve as the Director of Emergency Management for Gwinnett County. The successes noted in this annual report are a product of the dedicated, highly professional staff of emergency managers we have in Gwinnett County.

Sincerely,

Greg Swanson, Director of Emergency Management



Mission & Vision



Mission

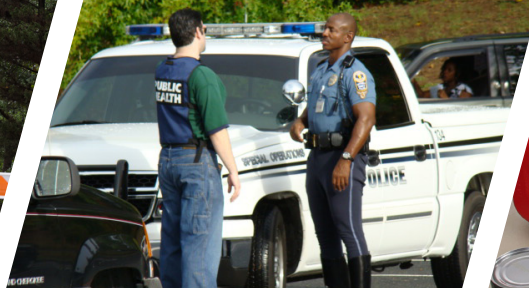
To administer a community wide comprehensive emergency management program in partnership with all departments, agencies, operating units, administration, and neighboring jurisdictions to save lives, protect property, and safeguard the environment.

Vision

The Vision of the Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management is to encourage and foster a disaster resistant community.



History



The Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security was established in December 2005 and Emergency Management was transferred from Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services to the Police Department in 2006. The Office of Homeland Security was removed from the Office of Emergency Management and assigned to the Special Investigations Section of the Police Department in October 2009.

The Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management represents the governing officials of the county and the cities within the county on matters pertaining to emergency management, helping to identify local hazards and outline plans and efforts to reduce the impact of disasters. The director is appointed by the Board of Commissioners, with concurrence of the governing officials of the cities.

2005



Gwinnett County Office of Homeland Security established. Emergency Management was under Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services

2006



Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management moves to the Police Department

2007



Declared disaster drought

2009



Declared disaster flood

2010



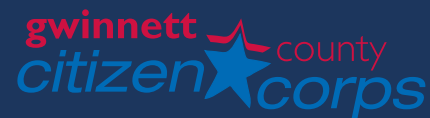
Tornado in Buford

2010



OEM moves into its new facility

2013



Citizen Corps Council established

2014



Winter storm

Administration & Finance



Significant effort was directed this year toward recruiting, selecting, and hiring staff to fill vacancies. The Office of Emergency Management has increased its authorized number of employees to five for the first time since 2010.



Greg Swanson
Director

Greg Swanson joined the Gwinnett County Office of Emergency Management in 2006 and was appointed Director in 2009. A certified emergency manager through the International Association of Emergency Managers and the State of Georgia, Mr. Swanson holds an undergraduate degree in Business Administration and a Masters of Public Administration. In 2014 he graduated from FEMA's National Emergency Management Executive Academy, a program designed for senior executives with coursework from Harvard University, the Naval Postgraduate School and other prominent higher education institutions.



James Thaxton
Emergency Management Specialist

James transferred to the Office of Emergency Management in March 2014 from Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services. Since 2012, he was assigned as a liaison to Emergency Management. In 2014, he earned the Certified Emergency Manager designation from the International Association of Emergency Managers, a nationally and internationally recognized professional certification.



Nancy Coltrin
Emergency Management Specialist

Nancy was promoted to the position of Emergency Management Specialist in June 2014. She came to the department from the private sector, holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice/Emergency and Disaster Management, and is a Certified Emergency Manager through the state of Georgia.



Ronald Brown
Emergency Management Specialist

Ronald was hired in December 2014 after recently retiring from a 26-year career with the New Jersey State Police. In 2013, he was promoted to the rank of captain and served in the Emergency Management Section, Homeland Security Branch as the bureau chief. In addition to his vast experience in public safety and emergency management, Ronald has a bachelor's degree in Public Administration.

Administration & Finance



Giles Roberts

Emergency Management Specialist

Giles was hired in December 2014 to begin his career in emergency management. He was a captain with 1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery (British Army), serving in Iraq and Afghanistan from 2007 to 2010. He graduated from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 2006, and from the University of Reading in 2005 with a Bachelor of Science in Biology.



Michael Shaw

Fire and Emergency Services Liaison

Michael was appointed to the position of Fire & Emergency Services Liaison in May 2016. He is a Firefighter III Paramedic and has a Masters of Arts Degree in Emergency and Disaster Management from American Public University.



Stephanie Swanson

Administrative Support Associate II

Stephanie transferred from the Department's Animal Welfare and Enforcement Unit to the Office of Emergency Management in September 2016. She is a graduate of Mississippi State University with a Bachelor's of Arts Degree in Music.

Incident Management



Being prepared for every type of emergency or disaster that could impact a county of 437 square miles and a population approaching a million is truly a daunting task, and takes a high degree of planning, communication, adaptability, and collaboration. All of that starts in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located in Lawrenceville.

When disaster strikes or threatens, the situation is assessed by an Emergency Management Duty Officer and a recommendation is made to the Director to open the EOC. Activation of the center includes communication with department directors as well as senior/elected officials. The Emergency Operations Center—with its dozens of phones, computer connections, and television monitors—is the hub for multi-jurisdiction and multi-agency response coordination. Experiences from this year remind us that disasters can and do happen in Gwinnett County. We were busy monitoring incidents, supporting on-scene responders, and facilitating executive policy as well as decision making.

Activation of the EOC can be triggered by potential or actual incidents: multiple or severe injuries; the need for sheltering; the disruption of critical services; and severe property damage.

Collaboration with County and municipal departments, private, non-profit, and volunteer organizations ensures we can fulfill missions to support disaster response. These groups will be called upon to provide the following capabilities: transportation of citizens, equipment, or supplies; debris management; restoration and repair of infrastructure; search and rescue; firefighting; law enforcement and security; sheltering, mass care, and feeding.

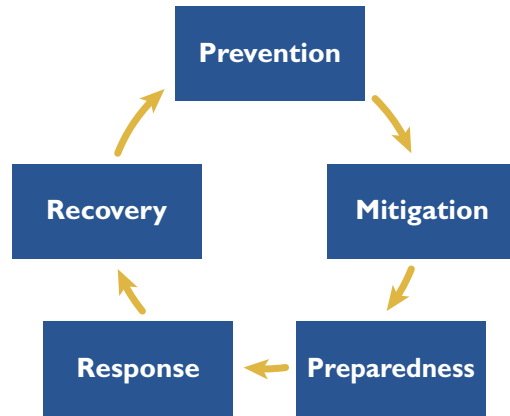
When the EOC is activated, representatives from various critical departments and agencies gather in a 2,500-square-foot room that serves as the nerve center for the County's response. Having representatives of various agencies in one room facilitates communication and better coordination of manpower and resources. It also allows County leaders to readily identify emerging trends and problem areas, consult with agency representatives, and quickly formulate proper reactions. The EOC also has a room for the media so reporters can be better informed, and can help contain rumors and share vital information with the public.

The EOC has sufficient internet and intranet capability that should a catastrophe strike the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center, officials at the EOC could continue to run the County on a short-term, emergency basis.

Planning & Equipment



Emergency management planning is a complex but critical field that encompasses the five basic phases of emergency management: prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The Emergency Operations Plan and its associated support and incident protocols is the cornerstone for disaster management across all phases. The plan touches all segments of the county—approximately 50 County and municipal departments, state, federal, and private agencies all contribute ideas and suggestions to the plan, help review it and analyze it, and approve it.



One of the best ways to ensure that Gwinnett County stays prepared for disasters is to encourage organizations to work together. Familiarity among different organizations fosters an environment that encourages inter-agency cooperation and is advanced by regular group planning, training, and exercises. Understanding how all of the pieces of the emergency management puzzle fit together helps us avoid duplication of work and foster synergies in relevant fields.

Staff from the Gwinnett Office of Emergency Management continue to work and train with multiple agencies across the county and the region to provide planning expertise or exercise those skills that are needed during times of disaster.

County plans are drafted and refined constantly based on new thinking and the latest data, on experiences from other jurisdictions near and far, on new technology and equipment, and on local, state and national priorities.

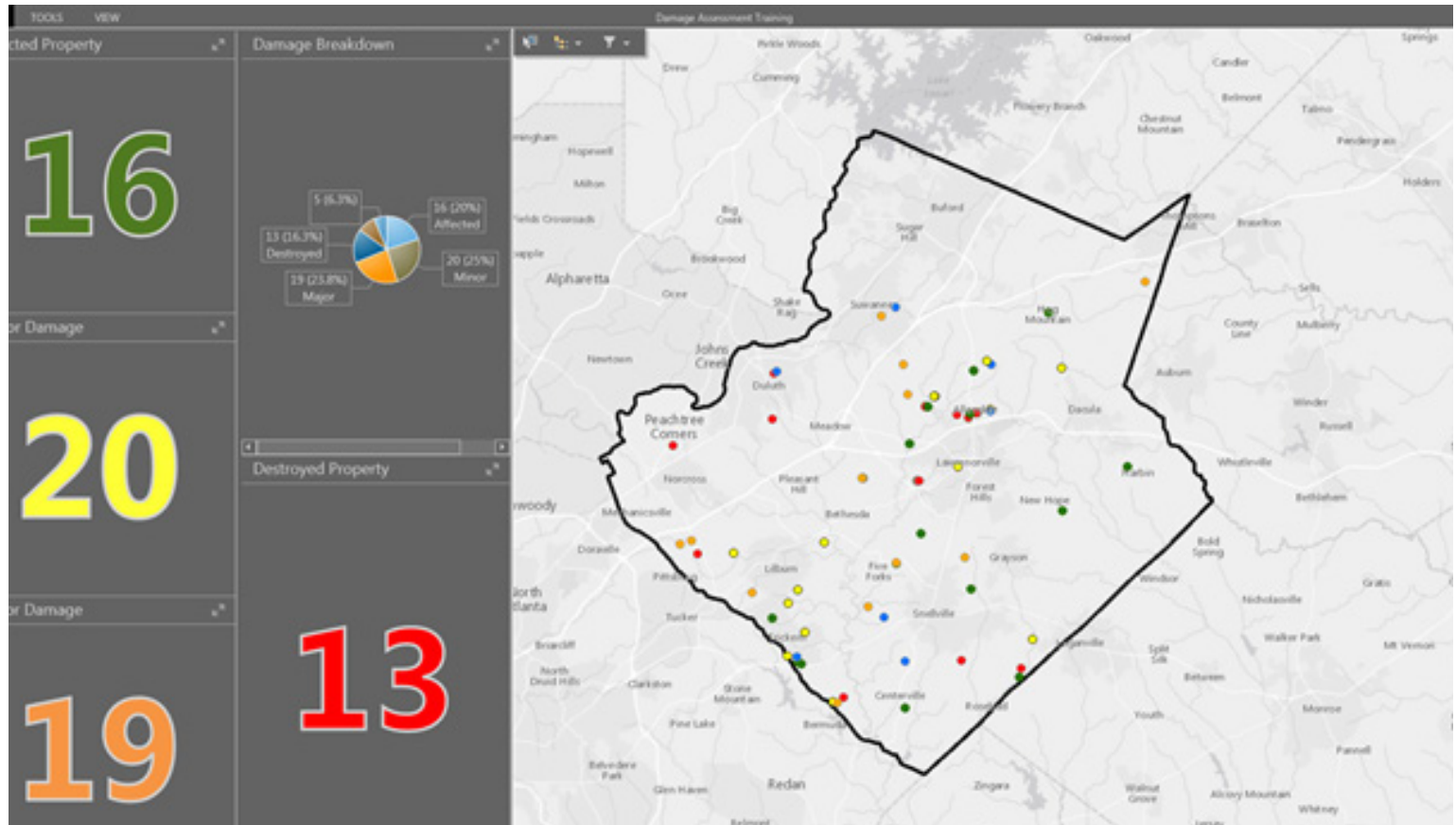


2016 Incidents



During and following a disaster, it is crucial to assess the level and location of damage in order to marshal resources for maximum benefit. Gwinnett County maintains a trained Damage Assessment Team with officers from the Gwinnett County Police Department's Quality of Life Unit.

In 2016, the Gwinnett County Emergency Management team developed new software that enables the Damage Assessment Team to confirm and calculate damage, and transmit data back to the EOC in real time. Levels of damage are categorized and displayed on a map to enhance the situational awareness for senior officials and decision-makers.



2016 Incidents Summary

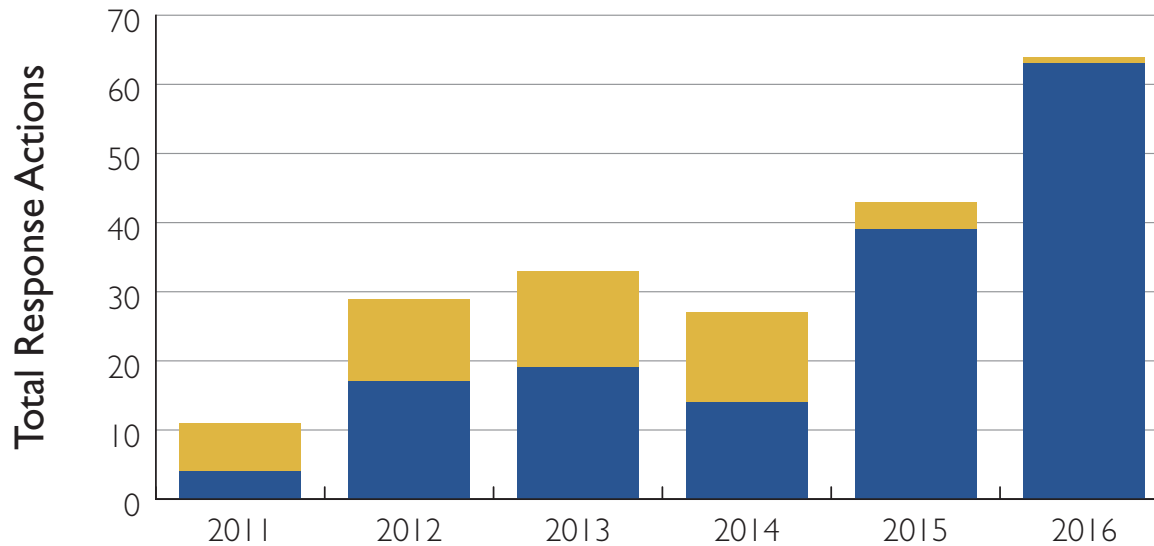




The Georgia Emergency Management Act of 1981 (O.C.G.A. 38-3-27) requires the local director or his designee be available or on call at all times. The Duty Officer serves as the Gwinnett Office of Emergency Management's (OEM) primary emergency point-of-contact for the alert, notification, and initiation of a preliminary response to major emergencies and disaster events occurring in Gwinnett County. Consideration will be given to activating the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) when the OEM becomes aware of an incident and anticipates a need for coordination and/or resource support from

the EOC. Typically, an Initial Situation Assessment is completed by the OEM Duty Officer and the decision made by the Duty Officer or Director:

In 2016, the OEM staff responded to 63 incidents, ranging from small, such as monitoring potentially severe weather, to larger events, such as wildfires, from man-made incidents, such as terrorist threats, to natural events, such as winter ice storms.

Office of Emergency Management: Incident Responses (2011 – 2016)



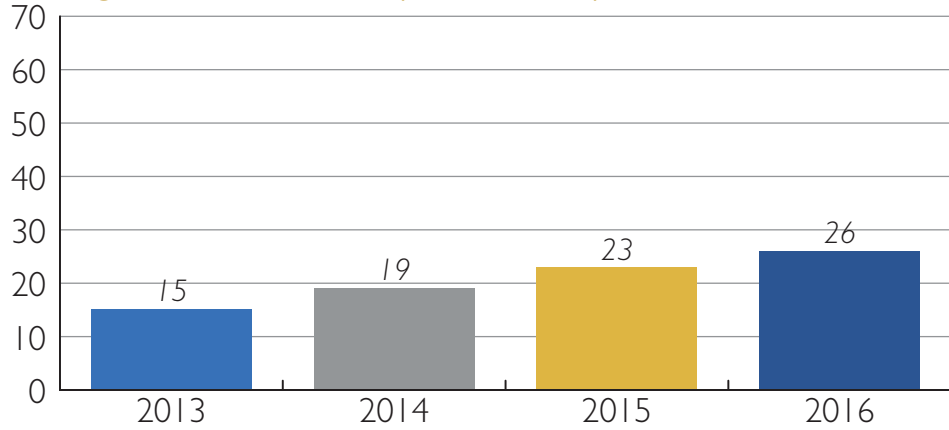
 Days of EOC Activation	7	12	14	13	4	1
 Duty Officer Actions	4	17	19	14	39	63
Total Responses	11	29	33	27	43	64

2016 Training & Exercises

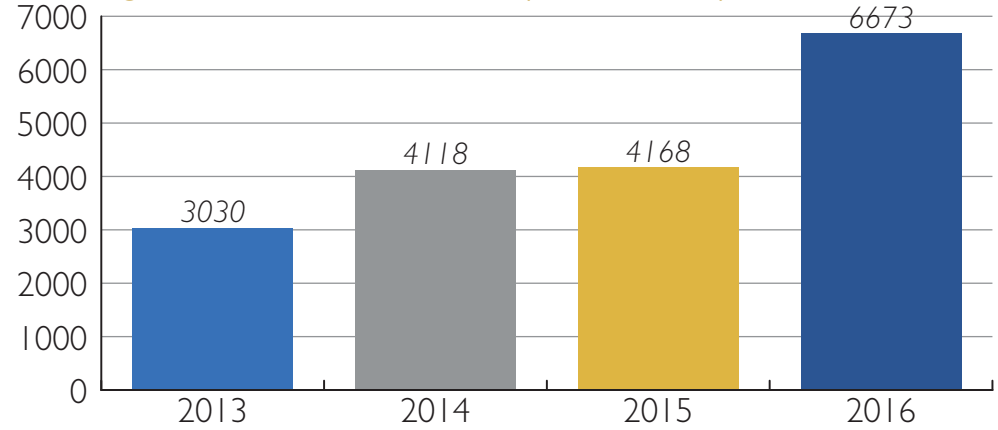
The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) manages a formal documented training program that includes training needs assessments, curriculum, course evaluations, and records of training. Training is regularly scheduled and specialized to the threats and hazards of the county. OEM was able to provide an additional 2,500 student contact hours over the amount offered during

2015. We manage a formal exercise program to tests the skills, abilities, and experience of emergency personnel as well as plans, policies, procedures, equipment, and facilities. All exercises must be conducted and documented in accordance with the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program. This year, OEM engaged over 100 more participants in exercises than in 2015.

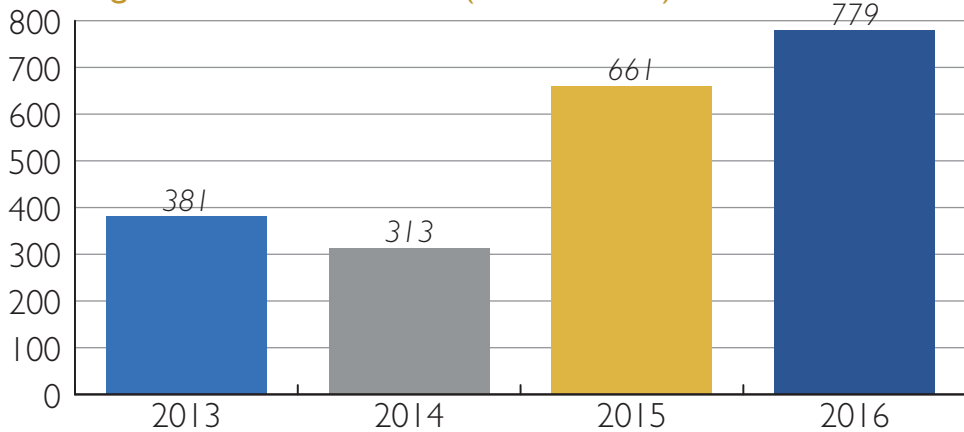
Training: Courses Offered (2013 – 2016)



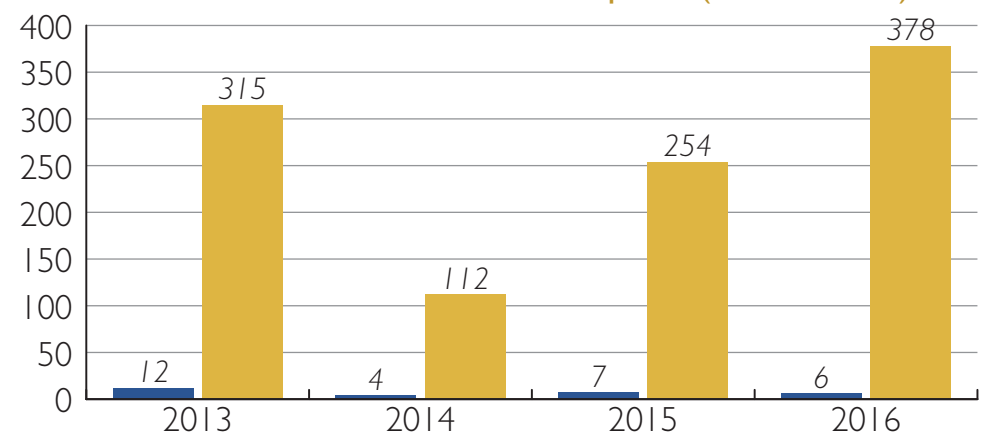
Training: Student Contact Hours (2013 – 2016)



Training: Number of Students (2013 – 2016)



Exercises Conducted/Number of Participants (2013 – 2016)



■ Exercises Conducted ■ Number of Participants

2016 Highlights & Accolades



The Gwinnett Search Team was formed and trained in 2016 to meet the increasing need to support incidents involving missing persons who might be in danger. More than 30 individuals from Emergency Management, the Gwinnett County Police Department, and Parks & Recreation put in more than 2,000 hours of training covering survival skills, land navigation, statistics on how disoriented people respond in various scenarios, search tactics, how to handle evidence, tracking, and rope and rescue techniques.

The training included:

Course	Length/Hours	Team Members Trained
Fundamentals of Search and Rescue (SARS)	24	31
Managing the Lost of Missing Person Emergency	16	36
Urban SAR Management	8	5
Urban SAR Management – Instructor Course	8	4
Child Abduction Response Team Training	32	21

2016 Highlights & Accolades



The Gwinnett Office of Emergency Management received two Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties in 2016 for its Emergency Operations Center Management Team and its Wireless Emergency Alert System. Since 2007, only six awards for Emergency Management and Response have been awarded to Georgia counties.

Typically, in a major disaster lasting several days or even weeks, counties will call for assistance from other counties. While the expertise is helpful, unfamiliarity with the community and local protocols can pose a challenge. Gwinnett County took the unusual step of cross-training about 40 people from various departments inside Gwinnett in specific duties so they can fill in seamlessly and ensure recovery continues unabated.

Gwinnett County also was recognized for being the one of first counties in the nation to implement a new cell phone technology that alerts people in the County of fires, hazardous materials incidents, local emergencies, shelter-in-place warnings, and 911 service outage emergencies. Called Wireless Emergency Alerts, they include the time, type of alert, and any action that should be taken. They do not duplicate AMBER alerts or extreme weather messages from the National Weather Service. Alerts do not disrupt text, calls, or data sessions in progress. Wireless Emergency Alerts have a unique audible signal and vibration cadence so everyone, including those with disabilities, will be aware of the text-like message coming in.



Please consider the environment before printing this report.

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