



INSIDE TODAY: COBB LIFE MAGAZINE

MDJonline.com
SUNDAY
 October 5, 2014 ♦ \$1
 Cobb's news source since 1866

INSIDE: \$202 IN COUPONS

ENDORSEMENT



David Perdue
 Opinion/8B



WEATHER: 68 | 52 Sunny, pleasant > 10D LIFE & STYLE: Mistletoe Market next week aims to benefit women and children > 1D

SPLOST ■ FIRST IN A SERIES

COBB ON THE GO



Justin O'Dell, left, co-chair of the SPLOST advocacy group 'Secure Cobb's Future,' and Darhyl Watkins, also part of the group, look down Cobb Parkway while standing on Windy Hill Road on a busy Friday afternoon and discuss the proposed four-lane road that would connect Windy Hill and Terrell Mill roads as part of the projects in the proposed 2016 SPLOST. / Staff-Jeff Stanton

\$287M of '16 revenue would go to fund transportation projects

By Ricky Leroux
 rleroux@mdjonline.com

MARIETTA — Cobb County has big plans for the \$750 million it expects to raise from a proposed six-year special one percent sales tax, and a majority of this money would be spent to improve the county's transportation infrastructure.

"I think it's representative of the diverse needs of the county — in every district, in every corner — and keeps the county moving forward."

— Justin O'Dell, co-chair of SPLOST advocate committee Secure Cobb's Future

Justin O'Dell, co-chair of the SPLOST advocate committee "Secure Cobb's Future," said with such a large sum of money, there is bound to be criticism.

SPLOST, 6A

BY THE NUMBERS



* Includes signals and planning

LAND SALE ■ HICKORY LAKE

Residents unhappy city took \$2M hit

By Hilary Butschek
 hbutschek@mdjonline.com

SMYRNA — Residents say they're unhappy they were left out of a deal the city made to sell land at a loss to a developer.

The city issued more than \$16 million in bonds to purchase and raze the 728-unit Hickory Lakes apartment complex on the corner of Old Concord and Windy Hill roads in 2010.

On Sept. 18, Smyrna sold the 47-acre property to Smyrna Grove Developer LLC, for \$14 million, said Mayor Max Bacon.

The Delaware-based developer plans to build 200 single-family homes on the property, which will be sold for about \$350,000 each, he said.

"We are extremely excited about it. We hope it will be a catalyst for improvement in the area. That's what we really wanted (when we bought the land)," Bacon said.



Max Bacon

UNHAPPY, 7A

POLITICS ■ MONTHLY BREAKFAST

Rep. speaks about Ebola, election to Cobb GOP

Price: 'The United States is not western Africa when it comes to terms of fighting disease'

By Emily Boorstein
 emboorstein@mdjonline.com

MARIETTA — A day after an Ebola scare at the Cobb County jail, U.S. Rep. Tom Price of Roswell told about 135 of his fellow Republicans the U.S. needs to be "transparent" about the virus.

He spoke about Ebola at the Cobb GOP's monthly breakfast at its Roswell Street headquarters Saturday morning.

"This is real. The disease is real. The challenge to the world is real. But some of the ideas about how to combat this are naive and not helpful," Price said. "I don't believe that stopping flights from western Africa is a reasonable plan. The world is very small."

On Friday, DUI suspect Harry Randall Withers, 35, of Suffolk, Va., was tested for Ebola after showing flu-like symptoms and telling authorities at the Cobb jail he had



Tom Price

PRICE, 8A

CITY COUNCIL ■ STORMWATER RUNOFF SYSTEM

Officials: Proposed fees won't affect homeowners

By Emily Boorstein
 emboorstein@mdjonline.com

KENNESAW — City officials say proposed fees to maintain its stormwater runoff system won't hit

homeowners' wallets, and there are other ways for businesses and nonprofits to reduce their bills.

Any precipitation that doesn't seep into the ground flows into the

system, as water drains from surfaces such as rooftops, roads and parking lots.

Councilwoman Cris Eaton-Welsh, who chairs the city's stormwater

committee, cited a federal mandate requiring municipalities with more than 10,000 residents to have a program to monitor

FEES, 7A



SPLOST

From 1A

“When you have project lists that big, and when you have infrastructure improvements that big, you’re going to have things that not everybody agrees with or not everybody thinks should be in there,” he said. “But by and large, I think it’s representative of the diverse needs of the county — in every district, in every corner — and keeps the county moving forward.”

Cobb Chairman Tim Lee said a majority of the SPLOST funds go toward the Cobb DOT because it has the largest capital and maintenance costs of any of the county departments.

“So, it comes to reason that the DOT would have the highest investment, if you would, of SPLOST funds because just by the nature of what it is they have to keep up,” he said.

According to county documents, there are more than 8,400 roads in Cobb maintained by the county DOT, representing 2,480 miles of asphalt.

Faye DiMassimo, director of the Cobb Department of Transportation, said 98.5 percent of the county’s transportation budget comes from SPLOST revenue.

“As other traditional

“If we didn’t have SPLOST, we would have to either likely double our millage rate in the general fund or make drastic cuts to services.

— Tim Lee, Cobb County commission chairman

sources of funding, including federal and state, continue to be increasingly constrained, local sources of funding, such as SPLOST, are (a) component of our overall funding strategy,” she said.

However, critics of the SPLOST point to the percentage of the transportation budget funded by the special tax as a reason to vote it down.

“The county has become over-dependent on SPLOST,” said Lance Lamberton, chairman of the Cobb Taxpayers Association. “The transportation budget is like, 98 percent dependent on SPLOST. We need to go back to the way money was allocated in previous years. We’ve gone way beyond the whole idea of special purpose.”

Lee said the county needs the transportation improvements to help attract both businesses and individuals to Cobb, calling the SPLOST a “quality of life” issue.

“It’s not that we’re necessarily dependent on (the SPLOST),” he said. “If we want to maintain the level of service and the quality of service that we do, there’s a cost associated with it. ... If we didn’t have SPLOST, we would have to either likely double our millage rate in the general fund or make drastic cuts to services.”

Of the \$287.3 million in SPLOST funds going toward transportation, about \$64.3 million would go toward resurfacing roads, \$8.9 million would be used to maintain stormwater drainage systems on the roadways and \$19.6 million would be spent on replacing or repairing bridges and culverts.

Additionally, \$35.1 million would be spent on constructing new sidewalks, with \$18.5 million allocated for sidewalks and bike path improvements for District 4 in south Cobb alone.

Commissioner Lisa

Cupid, who represents the south Cobb area, said sidewalk improvements is the “No. 1 request that I’ve received from constituents since being in office.”

About \$22.2 million of the SPLOST revenue would go toward improving intersections, and about \$31.3 million would be used to improve the safety and operation of the roads themselves, including adding new turn lanes. The county is also planning to spend \$6 million to increase safety in school zones, and \$12 million would be used for traffic signals and traffic management planning.

MAJOR PROJECTS

At \$88 million, the majority of the funds allocated for transportation improvements would be spent on thoroughfare improvements, although \$50 million would be set aside as a local match for federal and state grants. The remaining \$38 million would go toward just two projects, both involving Windy Hill Road.

An \$18 million project seeks to improve traffic conditions on Windy Hill Road between South Cobb Drive and Atlanta Road by widening, adding medians, improving intersections and pedestrian elements.

The project, called the Windy Hill Boulevard Project, is a joint venture with Smyrna and would separate local traffic from commuters just passing through with a new bridge, DiMassimo said.

“It will improve the efficiency,” DiMassimo said. “The Windy Hill corridor is a high-demand road, a lot of traffic there. But you’ve also got a lot of pedestrian activity in that area, and this will ... improve the pedestrian activity and provide better connectivity for the community there.”

Additionally, a \$20 million project would connect Windy Hill and

Terrell Mill roads with a new four-lane road, which DiMassimo called “much needed.”

The new road would be constructed near Spectrum Circle on the east side of Interstate 75. Businesses in the area could be affected, DiMassimo said, because the county would have to obtain the land to build the road. She said the county is already working on determining what land it needs to purchase and from whom.

“That kind of coordination is something we do routinely,” she said.

Jim Wilgus, deputy director of the Cobb DOT, said the project will be particularly necessary once the state DOT completes its \$834 million managed lanes project. The project will add about 30 miles of reversible toll lanes along Interstate 75 in Cobb and Cherokee counties.

The lanes, which will be separated from the interstate’s other lanes, will run south in the mornings and north in the evenings to provide commuters a guaranteed drive time if they are willing to pay a variable toll.

The managed lanes will have an exit at Terrell Mill Road, Wilgus said, so the county must make improvements along its route to handle the expected increase in traffic.

There are several projects on the SPLOST list related to the managed lanes project, which DiMassimo said are required to ensure the managed lanes serve Cobb well.

A \$12 million project would widen Bells Ferry Road between Cobb Parkway and Interstate 575, a \$5.4 million project would do the same for Big Shanty Road between Chastain Meadows Parkway and Bells Ferry Road and a \$10 million project would widen Hickory Grove Road, the northern most exit of the

MORE SPLOST NUMBERS

- ♦ Projected collections: **\$750 million**
- ♦ Cities’ share: **\$185 million**
- ♦ Countywide projects: **\$39 million**
- ♦ Transportation: **\$287.3 million**
- ♦ Public safety: **\$88 million**
- ♦ Public services (parks, libraries, senior services): **\$102.9 million**
- ♦ Support services (facilities, information technology): **\$48 million**

managed lanes, between Baker and Wade Green roads.

The Cobb DOT hopes to receive state or federal funding for these three projects, however, so the county may not have to cover the projects’ full costs. However, there is no funding dedicated at the state level for these projects at this time, DiMassimo said. If federal or state grants are not available, DiMassimo said the county DOT will “continue to try to develop funding strategies for them.”

The list of projects the county hopes to finance

with federal or state funding contains some of the biggest ticket items. For example, a \$60 million dollar project would attempt to improve traffic flow at the intersection of Windy Hill Road and Cobb Parkway with a new tunnel.

“That intersection is one that is such a heavy load on both Cobb Parkway and Windy Hill (Road) that physically we need to separate the two roads,” Wilgus said. “The concept right now is to put Cobb Parkway under Windy Hill.”

The full project list is available at cobbcounty.org.



The Marietta Local

“On Historic Marietta Square at the corner of Atlanta Street and Roswell St”

Mon. - Fri. 7am-2:30pm • Sat. 8am-2:30pm


770-794-2299
thelocalmarietta.com

2014 Taste of Marietta
“BEST FRIED CHICKEN”

This is a Must Try!


Our “Award Winning” Fried Chicken and Our “Amazing French Toast” with Granny Smith Cinnamon Apples and Real, Maple Syrup

“This is the Best Meal on the Square!!!”




COBBLIBRARY FOUNDATION

presents



Gala & Silent Auction



eg. emily giffin


Thursday, October 16th, 2014

Mark your calendars & join us for dinner and discussion with award winning novelist, Emily Griffin

This is the fourth annual gala for the Library Foundation whose purpose is to provide funds and build awareness for the library system’s programs and services. The Foundation, currently celebrating its 11th year, has funded numerous projects that have enriched the 16 Cobb libraries, including portable computer labs, eGovernment Stations, early learning stations for children and special books and multimedia materials for the Summer Reading Program as well as support of inaugural Teen Center programs and G.E.M.S. (Girls in Engineering, Math and Science) summer program.

Speaker and Award Recipient: Emily Griffin, award-winning author of 7 New York Times best selling novels. “Something Borrowed” made its way to the big screen with the movie starring Kate Hudson, and several of her follow-up novels have been optioned for development in Hollywood. This summer’s “The One and Only” shot immediately to #1 on the NYT list.

Event Details: The evening starts with a reception followed by Buffet, Cocktails, Auction. Gala chairs are Atlanta Braves Executive Vice President Mike Plant and his wife, Mary. Rob Garcia, COO, Bank of North Georgia will be emcee.



Do you love your library? Join the club! Volunteer, Support, and Brag about your Cobb County Public Library System! More information available at your local library or at www.cobblibraryfoundation.org

For reservations and information, please visit
www.cobblibraryfoundation.org
or call Executive Director Terri Capote at 770-528-2196



Sunday, Oct. 5, 2014

Public Safety Appreciation

Public Safety Appreciation Week
Oct. 6 - 12

The Cobb Chamber invites you to express thanks to the public safety personnel who keep Cobb County a safe place to work, live and play.

If your company, group or organization would like to participate in expressing thanks for the great public safety personnel in your area, we encourage you to:

- Write thank you notes and deliver them to your local public safety agency. Be sure to call ahead and make an appointment if necessary.
- Utilize your business or organization’s outdoor marquee to display a message of appreciation.
- Make a gift basket filled with items such as gift cards or store bought snacks for your local public safety agency.
- Change your Facebook profile image or your Facebook cover image to the Public Safety Appreciation Week icon.
- Share a photo of your group or company showing appreciation throughout the week with agoalsby@cobbchamber.org, or tweet it to @CobbChamber and use #cobbappreciates. By submitting a photo, you are authorizing the Chamber to use the image in Public Safety Appreciation promotions.

For more information, visit cobbchamber.org/publicsafety.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Register online at cobbchamber.org/events.

Monday, Oct. 6 - First Monday Breakfast
Location: Cobb Galleria Centre | 7:30 a.m. | Program: A Salute to Public Safety
Presenting Sponsors: Cobb EMC & Northside Hospital

Tuesday, Oct. 7 - Business Builders
Location: Cobb Chamber | 7:30 to 9 a.m. | Program: “The Art of War for Executives” by Donald G. Krause

Tuesday, Oct. 7 - Rebuilding Cobb’s Future
Location: KSU Center | 7:30 to 11 a.m. | Program: An Energetic Focus on Redevelopment
Keynote Speaker: Rick Baker, former Mayor, St. Petersburg, Fla.

Friday, Oct. 10 - Cobb Executive Women Luncheon
Location: The Georgian Club | 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. | Speaker: Hala Moddlemog, President & CEO, Metro Atlanta Chamber | Presenting Sponsor: Gas South

The *Marietta Daily Journal* provides this space weekly as a public service to the Cobb Chamber.