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City of Statesboro Quarterly

“Where the living remains softly southern”

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City of Statesboro
Contact Information:
City Hall
50 East Main Street
Statesboro, GA 30458

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 348
Statesboro, GA
30459

Phone:
(912) 764-5468

Fax:
(912) 764-4691

Website:
www.statesboroga.net

For more information
regarding the City of
Statesboro or the
newsletter, please
contact Public
Information
Officer Maggie Fitzgerald
at (912) 764-5468.

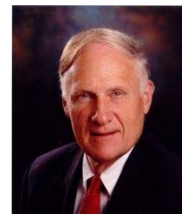
Greetings From The Mayor

Dear Readers,

Fall and the Holiday Seasons are upon us. As the weather starts to cool and the days get shorter, the City of Statesboro remains busy and continues to grow. Right now, our city is booming with growth and activity. With all the growth, our staff and officials are busy staying ahead of the growth ensuring that the city remains progressive, while continuing to provide outstanding customer service. In the city, we continue to be blessed with an excellent quality of life, and we are fortunate to live in a place that is heading in the right direction.

In this issue, you will notice that we have dedicated 2 pages to an article and a map highlighting our five mile fire district. Right now, the fire district is a major issue for

the City of Statesboro and I hope that our in-depth article will shed some light for you about the topic at hand. This is an issue that impacts taxes, insurance rates, and the growth of our Fire Dept., so I



Mayor Bill Hatcher

know you will be interested to learn more about how the fire district impacts you.

Also, make sure you check out our list of upcoming events. There are plenty of events coming up to celebrate the holidays.

Last, but not least, the City is holding an Election on November 6th. Three seats on the City Council, Districts 2, 3, and 5, will be open for election. I want to take this opportunity to stress how critical it is for you, as a citizen; to take the time to vote for the candidate that you feel will lead the city in the right direction. I encourage you to come out to City Hall for early voting on Monday, October 29th, Tuesday, October 30th, Wednesday, October 31st, Thursday, November 1st, Friday, November 2nd, or go to the polls on Tuesday, November 6th.

I hope you and yours have a happy, safe and blessed Thanksgiving and Christmas season.

Until next time,

Mayor Bill Hatcher

Help Low-Income Families With Energy Needs

While heat is a necessity, it's almost unaffordable to low-income households. Now, you can help less fortunate families who can't afford to heat their homes this winter through the Heating Energy Assistance Team (H.E.A.T.), a program that provides funds to help people pay their energy bills. Launched in 1983, H.E.A.T. is the oldest statewide fuel fund program in Georgia. All the money donated

to H.E.A.T. is distributed by the Georgia Department of Human Resources. Over the past 24 years, more than \$16 million has been distributed to more than 80,000 families.

Your gift will allow H.E.A.T. to extend its reach even further. Recipients of funds could be an elderly couple trying to get by on a fixed income; or a single parent with small children; or a family

whose breadwinner is out of a job. Please give now. Questions? Call 678406-0212.

How You Can Donate

Mail – Complete the form below and mail with your tax-deductible donation to H.E.A.T., Wachovia Bank, N.A., P.O. Box 930112, Atlanta GA 31193

Online – Logon to www.heatga.org.

Yes, I will help a family by supporting H.E.A.T.

My tax deductible donation of \$500 \$250 \$125 \$50 \$25 or other \$_____ is enclosed. Note: A \$500 donation helps at least two deserving families stay warm this winter. Donations of any amount are needed and welcomed.

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Phone _____ E-mail _____
Gas Provider _____ City of Statesboro

Make check payable to H.E.A.T.

Fill in this form and send it in an envelope addressed to:

H.E.A.T.
Wachovia Bank, N.A.
P.O. Box 930112
Atlanta, GA 31193



On behalf of Georgians who will stay warm during the winter because of your gift – thank you!

City Wants Fire Services Contract Changed

The City and County agreed in the House Bill 489 Service Delivery Strategy in March, 1999, that they would continue to provide fire protection services to the area in the Statesboro Fire District under the terms of an existing contract. That existing contract, which dates from the mid-1980's, for one-year terms, requires a payment of 25% of the City's fire department budget annually. Bulloch County assesses a separate Fire District millage rate on these county residents (currently 1.4 mills), then sends that payment to the City. For that, the City provides fire suppression services in the area outside the City Limits that is within five miles of a City fire station. (See the map on the facing page). This means that Fire District property owners get the same level of response to a fire, and the same Class 3 ISO fire insurance rating as if they were in the City, if their water system is adequate. The ISO (Insurance Services Office) rates fire departments from 1 (best) to 10 (unprotected). That rating is used to decide how much insurance companies will charge property owners for insurance. The better the rating, the lower the insurance premium will be. The Class 3 ISO is a significant improvement in both protection, and in savings on homeowners or commercial insurance compared to a district protected by a volunteer fire department. The insurance premium savings more than offset the additional millage rate to support the fire department.

It is important to understand that both this fire protection agreement and the Service Delivery Strategy were signed prior to the City building a second fire station on Fair Road in 2000. Opening that second fire station has significantly expanded the Fire District area that is covered by the Statesboro Fire Department. Just as important, there has been a lot of development since 2000 within the Fire District. The larger district, and the development growth within that district, has created a growing gap between who pays for the Statesboro Fire Department, and who receives its benefits.

Today, only 56.7% of the real property

protected by the Statesboro Fire Department is located within the City Limits. That means that 43.3% of the real property it protects is in the Fire District.

In the last 24 months, the Statesboro Fire Department responded to only 84 structure fires (buildings) within the City. But it responded to 50 in the Fire District and 46 more in the County, for a total of 96 outside the City. That shows that we are using more of our resources outside the city limits than inside.

The only issue here is: What is the fair way to divide the costs to provide this service? It is logical that the division of cost should mirror the receiving of benefits. Both groups receive the same level of benefits, so both should pay equally for the service. But, we have a situation where City of Statesboro property owners and residents are subsidizing those within the Fire District. The only fair way to divide this cost is to take that subsidy to zero. That would mean we should enter into a contract that allocates the cost percentage based upon the percentage of appraised value of the property protected. No city can be expected to provide a service outside its corporate limits to non-residents at a price that is lower than it charges its own citizens.

The City's FY 2008 Budget for the Fire Department is:

\$2,027,397 Total Operating Budget for the Statesboro Fire Department
 + 206,552 Total Capital Budget for the Statesboro Fire Department
 \$2,233,949 Total Operating and Capital Budget for SFD

The Bulloch County Board of Commissioners has left the Fire District tax millage at 1.4 mills for this year. The Fire District has \$448,715,773 in assessed valuation. Multiplied by 0.0014, it will generate \$628,202.08. So, the difference between the dollars the Fire District will pay and what it should pay is:

Multiply the fire department budget of \$2,233,949 X .43 = \$960,598.07. Then subtract the \$628,202.08 the tax will provide.

This calculation shows that the City will be subsidizing the Fire District by \$332,395.99 in the current fiscal year. The Fire District will be paying only 28% of the fire department's budget, not 43%. While that is better than the 25%, it is not even close to ending this subsidy.

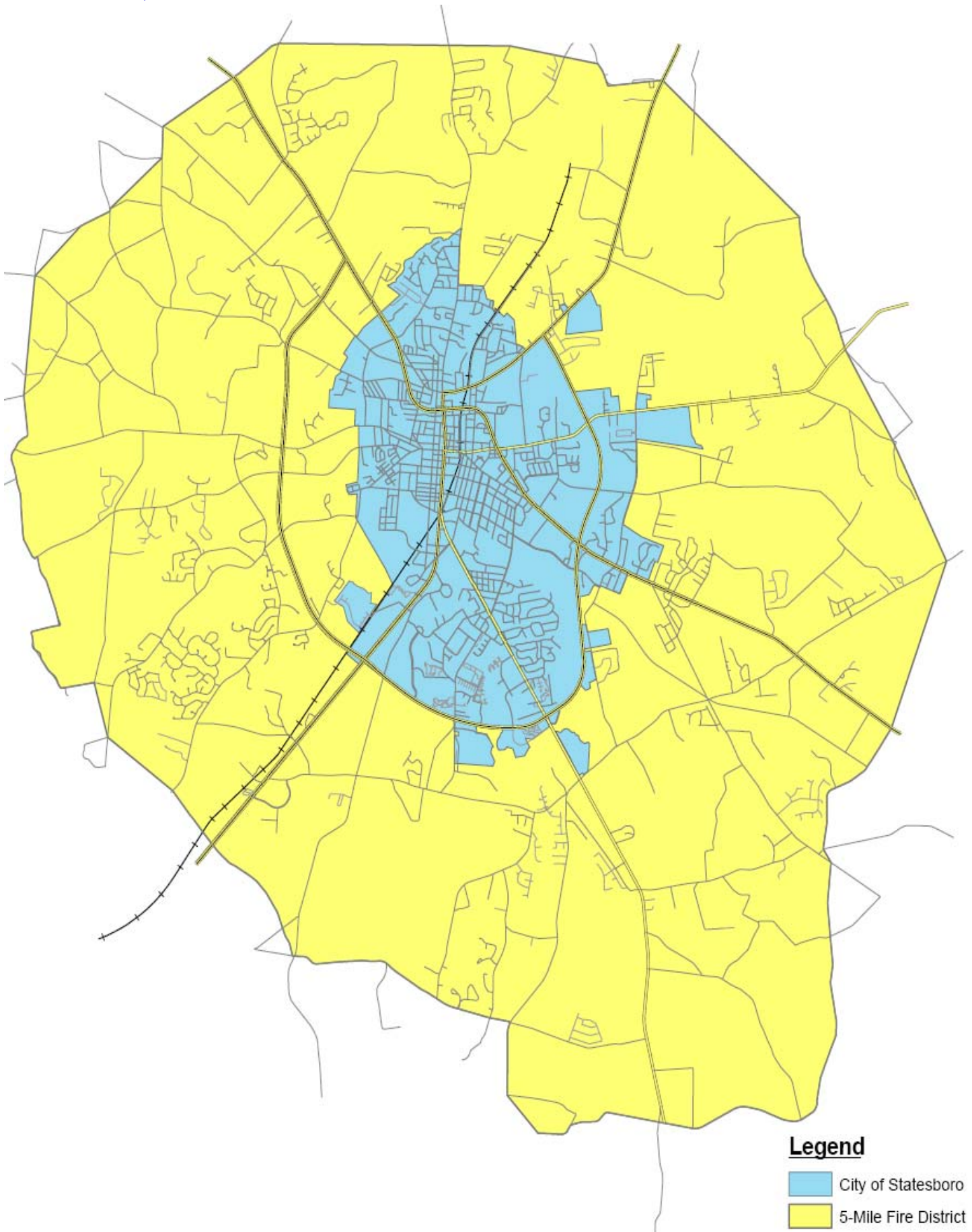
To end this subsidy, the Fire District millage rate needs to increase from 1.4 mills to 2.14 mills, or a 0.74 mill increase. On a house or business with a market value of \$100,000, that would result in a \$29.60 tax increase. It should be noted that as recently as 2002, the Fire District millage rate was 2.84 mills. In 2000 it was 3.38 mills. 2.14 mills is still considerably below those levels.

If the subsidy does not end, City residents will be paying 0.57 mills more than they should to subsidize other people's fire protection. On a house or business with a market value of \$100,000, that is costing a City resident \$22.80 more than it should. We believe that City property owners and residents are overpaying, and those within the Fire District are underpaying for the same service.

The Mayor and City Council have notified the County that we want to renegotiate the Fire Services Contract to end this subsidy, as allowed under the Service Delivery Strategy general law. That law calls for mediation if the parties cannot agree. We believe that we will be able to negotiate this change in a fair manner. However, we wanted you to have a detailed explanation of this issue and how it affects your pocketbook, as the negotiations move forward.

**Article Written By:
 City Manager George Wood**

For more information regarding the Fire Services Contract, please call (912)764-5468.



Upcoming Events In Statesboro



Averitt Center For The Arts

Upcoming Events

- November 3, 2007—Barefoot (Band)
7:30 pm, \$20.00 per person & \$10.00 youth
- November 16, 2007—Rudolf The Red Nosed Reindeer, 9:00 am & 10:30 am, \$7.00
- November 15, 16, 17, 18, 2007—The Nutcracker, 7:00 pm (15-17) & 2:00 pm (17-18)
\$15.00 adults & \$10.00 youth
- December 14, 15, 16, 2007—Emma's Holiday Follies, 7:30 pm (14-15) & 2:00 pm (16)
\$10.00 adult & \$8.00 youth
- January 5 & 12, 2008—First Annual Short Circuit Traveling Film Festival, 5:30 pm
- For more information regarding Averitt Center & Emma Kelly Theater Events, please call (912) 212-2787 or visit the website www.averittcenterforthearts.org

Don't Forget To Sign Up For the Annual Chili Cook-Off!

For An Application, Please Call Your Main Street Office at 912-764-7227.

City Council And Planning Commission Agendas and Meetings can be found on our website:

www.statesboroga.net

Please check out our on-line calendar for community events!

City Council Meetings

- Council Chambers-City Hall
9:00 am—November 6, 2007
6:00 pm—November 20, 2007
9:00 am—December 4, 2007
6:00 pm—December 18, 2007
9:00 am—January 2, 2008
6:00 pm—January 15, 2008

Planning Commission Meetings

- Council Chambers-City Hall
4:00-5:30 pm—November 13, 2007
4:00-5:30 pm—December 11, 2007
4:00-5:30 pm—January 8, 2008

Alcohol Control

Board Meetings

- Council Chambers-City Hall
3:00 pm—November 20, 2007
3:00 pm—December 18, 2007

4:00-5:30 pm—January 15, 2008

Tree Board Meetings

- Conference Room-City Hall
1:30 pm—November 26, 2007
1:30 pm—January 22, 2008

For more information, please call (912) 764-5468.

Other Upcoming Events

October 26th, 2007—Cotton Pickin Harvest Festival at Mill Creek
Festival starts at 6:30 pm

For more information, please call 764-5637.

October 31, 2007—Halloween

Trick-or-Treating from 5:30 to 8:30 pm

December 6, 2007—Holiday Celebration Downtown Statesboro

Chili Cook-Off & Christmas Parade
Event Starts at 5:00 pm.

First Fridays

- 5:30 pm—November 2, 2007
5:30 pm—December 7, 2007
5:30 pm—January 4, 2008

Main Street Message: The First Friday In Downtown Statesboro

Every month, on the First Friday, Downtown Statesboro comes alive. After the work week is over, and the new month begins, there is no better place to be than out with friends in Downtown Statesboro. Stop in the restaurants and you might find some live music, or some other treat that you don't find at any other time. Come in to one of the gallery openings to meet the artists. Or if the weather is nice you may even find art and music out in the street. Shops, restaurants, galleries, and the Averitt Center all stay open a little later on that day and offer activities

that are not offered at any other time of the month. All the fun starts at 5:30PM and goes until at least 8PM. To find out more just stop by the Averitt Center for the Arts to pick up your guide on that night and see what's going on.

In December we will have an additional treat by adding Thursday to the Monthly event. The Holiday Celebration will kick-off Thursday December 6th at 5PM, with Santa arriving in town during the parade. There will be food and entertainment, as well as many activities that will

keep the kids happy. The events will also include a Savannah Ave. Home tour, as well as candlelight shopping on First Friday. Look for more information coming soon, or just call the Main Street Statesboro office at: 912-764-7227, or visit: WWW.FIRSTFRIDAY.COM

Heath Seymour
Executive Director
Main Street

Downtown Statesboro
Development Authority

