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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **County Government Has A Productive Year In 2014**

Fayette County, Georgia, December 12, 2014 – Once again, the significant progress with reinvigorating the county government continued throughout the year of 2014. The progress continued with no increase in taxes and a **millage rate decrease**.

What is soon to be the largest economic development project in Fayette County, **Pinewood Studios**, opened its door in January and immediately began filming operations with the Marvel Comics movie Ant-Man. The studio just recently announced that it was doubling its capacity in Fayetteville.

The year 2014 was good for **public art in Fayette County**. The quest for public art began with the County Clerk's Office managing the replacement of two fading, peeling, and deteriorating billboards at the county administrative offices in Fayetteville. Art students from Fayette County High School provided the art work and the project was unveiled on May 9.

The county formed the Public Art Committee and three of their projects were approved and completed with the largest being the 95 feet by 12 feet mural at the Crosstown Water Treatment Facility in Peachtree City. The county also held its first annual Scarecrow Competition with scarecrow builders participating from all over the county.

The Board of Commissioner took several stands supporting **ethics reform** in the State Legislature via resolutions.

The county's high school **internship program** is one of the best of its kind in Georgia. For the second year, local high school students were tasked to research and promote projects like the restoration of the Hopeful Primitive Baptist Church historical site, create safe golf cart passages along Redwine Road to the Starr's Mill School Complex and look into the pros and cons of fluoride in the county's water system. The interns presented in front of large audiences and helped initiate several efforts on behalf of the county.

The Fayette County Extension Office had **987 youth enrolled in 4-H**, engaging students in learning, traveling, competing, communicating, sharing, and growing. Over 200 students attended camp through Fayette County 4-H.

County Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) had a banner year with the **opening of Fire Station 3**, a \$1.8 million facility in Tyrone. In addition, the new Emergency Operations Center will be opened in January 2015, which has state of the art audio and visual components to run countywide operations in a disaster.

Fire and EMS along with other local agencies received recognition for providing some of the finest emergency assistance during the large snow and ice storms.

The county **Information Technology** Department converted the county computing network to cloud based Microsoft Office 365 reducing the costs to taxpayers and creating more value for staff users.

In August, 2014, Standard and Poor's upgraded Fayette County from 'AA+' to the **highest bond rating assigned 'AAA,'** and received the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

The Board of Commissioners **passed new golf cart usage and registration ordinances**. The new county ordinances mirror Peachtree City's by allowing 15-year olds with a learner's permit to drive a golf cart without a parent. The registration of carts in the unincorporated county begins January 2015. In addition, the county initiated plans to extend multi-use path infrastructure to Highgrove and Whitewater Creek subdivisions.

A **massive 10,471 downloadable audio books** circulated through the county's library along 98,300 computer sessions logged.

The library collaborated with the US Citizenship Immigration Services and held its first Naturalization Ceremony in April and 104 immigrants became United States citizens.

The Recreation Department staff administered **595 different classes and programs** for the year.

A total of **156 single-family residences were permitted** in the unincorporated county in 2014.

The Public Works Department finished the **Kenwood Road Bridge replacement** in early 2014.

The Georgia Department of Transportation formally supported the partial cloverleaf design for the **interchange at Highway 74 and I-85**, increased funding for the project and is making efforts to accelerate project delivery.

Fayette County became one of the first counties in the nation to allow **autonomous vehicle testing** on its local road, but access to local state highways is still a cloudy issue.

The process to repair the **Emerald Lake Dam and Longview Road Dam** began this year. Likewise, the Brittany Way stormwater project was completed, the first project accomplished using stormwater funds.

Fayette County's **Floodplain Management Program** maintained its CRS 6 rating from the National Floodplain Insurance Program resulting in approximately \$60,000 savings annually for residential flood insurance premiums.

The county provided the maintenance and upkeep of over **140 county-owned structures** totaling in excess of 700,000 square feet.

The **old jail facility renovation** design began in 2014 with construction starting in 2015. The county also purchased **The Links Golf Course** as right-of-way for the East Fayetteville Bypass, a new shooting range for law enforcement and a new training center for the Sheriff's Office and Fayette Fire and EMS.

The Board of Commissioners collaborated with the Fayette Humane Society to create a **unique and successful program to curb the stray cat population** involving trapping, neutering and release the animals.

The Fayette County Water System implemented **Citizen Self-Serve**, an online tool for customers to access their account online. The Water System also **installed a new state of the art THM Online Analyzer** at each water plant, making the county's system the only one in Georgia to use this advanced technology. Major adjustments to Water System operations are being implemented.

The county also agreed to work with Peachtree City to resolve issues related to the city-owned **Lake Peachtree**. The county will commence the dredging of the lake in January. The city is still awaiting word from the Safe Dams section of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division on the classification of the spillway and dam.

In another show of cooperation, the county entered into an agreement with Fairburn, Tyrone and Peachtree City to create the **74 Gateway Coalition** to support initiatives of common interest along the transportation corridor.

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