

Oconee County Annual Report 2018

OCONEE COUNTY COURT HOUSE

**Smart Government
Smart Growth
Smart Infrastructure
Excellent Quality of Life**



STRATEGIC GOAL 1: SMART GOVERNMENT

PROVIDE SERVICES WITH EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS, CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT, AND TRANSPARENCY

- > Leverage technology to improve operational efficiency
- > Examine business practices/identify best practices to improve customer service and service delivery
- > Improve and expand citizen engagement experience
- > Leverage training opportunities to further staff development



STRATEGIC GOAL 2: SMART GROWTH

GROWTH THAT FITS THE VISION OF OCONEE COUNTY

- > Adopt and implement priorities of the Comprehensive Plan
- > Pursue economic growth opportunities appropriate to community vision
- > Determine and create appropriate economic development strategy
- > Identify additional tourism, community event, and historical preservation opportunities



STRATEGIC GOAL 3: SMART INFRASTRUCTURE

DEVELOP FAR-SIGHTED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS THAT MEET THE COUNTY'S NEEDS NOW, AND GOING FORWARD

- > Improve and expand access to high-tech infrastructure
- > Develop and implement long-range capital asset maintenance strategy
- > Develop long-term facility strategy
- > Develop and maintain an effective transportation network
- > Develop and maintain appropriate water and sewer network



STRATEGIC GOAL 4: QUALITY OF LIFE

CULTIVATE OCONEE COUNTY'S EXCELLENT QUALITY OF LIFE

- > Develop and maintain high-quality park system to serve community
- > Support and ensure effective community-oriented public safety
- > Seek to expand pedestrian and trail opportunities throughout the community



MISSION

Provide the highest quality services in a fiscally responsible manner to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of all Oconee citizens.

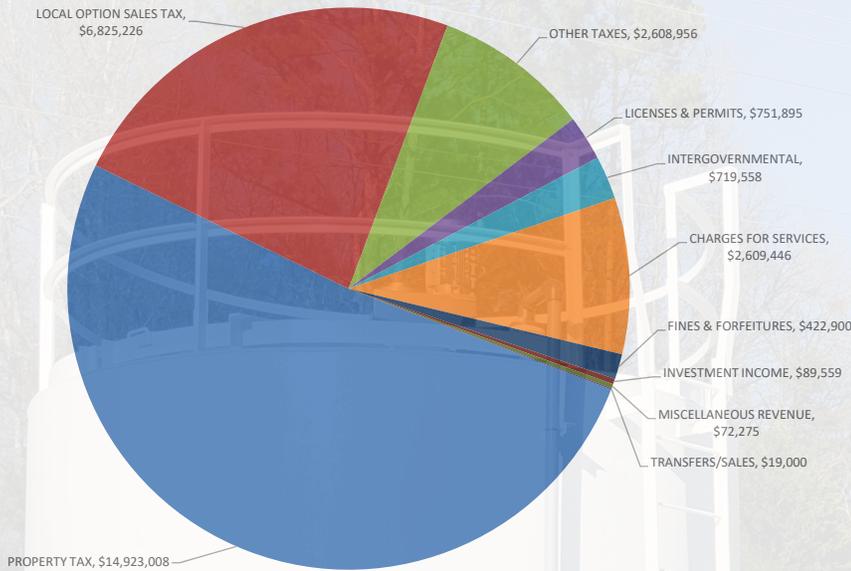
VISION

An engaged community with world-class schools, thriving commercial sectors, vibrant town centers, high-quality residential housing and diverse amenities, and the preservation of the rural quality of life.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION FY 2019

JULY 1, 2018 - JUNE 30, 2019

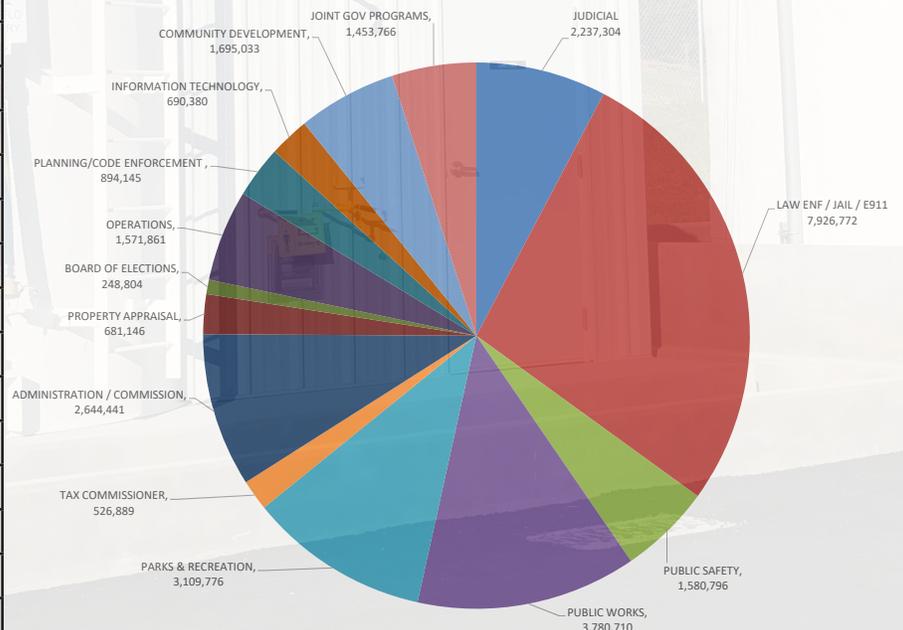
FY 2019 Budget General Fund Revenues



Source	Amount
Property Tax	\$14,923,008
LOST	\$6,825,226
Other Taxes	\$2,608,956
Licenses & Permits	\$751,895
Intergovernmental	\$719,558
Charges for Services	\$2,609,446
Fines & Forfeitures	\$422,900
Investment Income	\$89,559
Miscellaneous	\$72,275
Transfers/Sales	\$19,000
Total	\$29,041,823

FY 2019 Budget General Fund Expenditures

Function	Amount
Law Enforcement/Jail/E911	\$7,926,772
Public Safety	\$1,580,796
Public Works	\$3,780,710
Parks & Recreation	\$3,109,776
Tax Commissioner	\$526,889
Administration/Commission	\$2,644,441
Property Appraisal	\$681,146
Board of Elections	\$248,804
Operations	\$1,571,861
Planning/Code Enforcement	\$894,145
Information Technology	\$690,380
Community Development	\$1,695,033
Joint Governmental Programs	\$1,453,766
Judicial	\$2,237,304
Total	\$29,041,823



*Financial information presented on this page is for fiscal year 2019. All other information in this report is for the 2018 calendar year.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: SMART GOVERNMENT

PROVIDE SERVICES WITH EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS, CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT, AND TRANSPARENCY

At Oconee County Government, our goal is to provide outstanding service and to ensure our residents, visitors, and business community have ready and convenient access to all the information they need. Active, informed, and engaged citizens are the foundation of a successful and thriving community.

Find Information & Save Time with the Oconee County Website

The Oconee County website at www.oconeecounty.com is a great place to keep up with all the events and news in county government!

- Use the Notify Me button to sign up for your choice of newsletters and alerts delivered to you via email or text - stay up-to-date with Board of Commissioners and committee meetings, new job postings, and departmental alerts
- Pay your bills online, including traffic citations, vehicle registrations, property taxes, and water bills
- Find Parks & Recreation programs and register and pay online
- Use the Report a Concern button to contact county personnel regarding potholes, broken water meters, erosion problems, animal complaints, littering, and other concerns
- View agendas and minutes for the Board of Commissioners and citizen advisory boards and committees
- Submit open records requests

Watch Faces of Oconee County Government

Get to know the people who serve you! Check out our series of short video profiles at www.oconeecounty.com/faces to find out about the Oconee County employees who go above and beyond to get the job done.



Focus on Engagement

Oconee County established an Office of Communications in 2018 to more effectively meet the need for communication with residents, visitors, and businesses in our community. The Office of Communications manages the website, social media, media relations, and video and print content for the county.

We want to hear from you! Let us know how we can communicate more effectively with you by emailing us at oconeeconnects@oconee.ga.us.

Add your HOA to our email contact list to learn about local projects or issues that may affect your neighborhood. Email HOA contact info to oconeeconnects@oconee.ga.us.

Increasing Efficiency & Effectiveness

In 2018, the county reorganized the Planning & Code Enforcement Department, including its processes and oversight procedures, in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness and ensure better quality residential development with slab and grade criteria. A complete overhaul of the planning and development submittal process was undertaken to improve accountability and predictability of process.

In addition, the county has been able to reduce the number of full-time employees overall from 265 to 261.

Efficiency was increased at the Board of Elections and Registration with a staffing change from three full-time staff to two full-time and one part-time staff members. Elections and Registration conducted four elections along with a City of Watkinsville election in 2018, and the county began publishing a map to help early voters find parking.

Oconee County Voting Stats

- 43,713 ballots were cast at elections throughout the year
- Staff trained 234 election poll workers
- Staff served over 19,800 early voters
- Staff mailed out over 1,900 absentee ballots
- Over 22,200 voters cast ballots at their precincts
- Oconee County had 29,838 registered voters, as of 12/31/18



Looking Ahead

Oconee County has exciting projects in the works!

A top priority of Oconee County Government is increasing access to high-speed internet throughout the county for the benefit of our residents and businesses. Stay tuned for more developments!

Projects on the horizon for 2019:

- BS&A software system implementation to provide additional financial and budget transparency
- Establishment of Visitor's Bureau
- Courthouse expansion project
- Animal Shelter renovations
- Improvements to sanitary sewer system
- Administrative building and master facility plan
- Unified Development Code (UDC) revision
- Senior Center expansion

Stay in Touch

Official Oconee County Government Social Media Accounts

Stay connected with Oconee County Government on the go! Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Youtube!

- Facebook @OconeeConnects
- Twitter @OconeeConnects
- Instagram @oconeeconnects
- Youtube @Oconee County Government

Many individual departments have social media accounts, too! Visit oconeecounty.com/socialmedia for a full listing!

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: SMART GROWTH

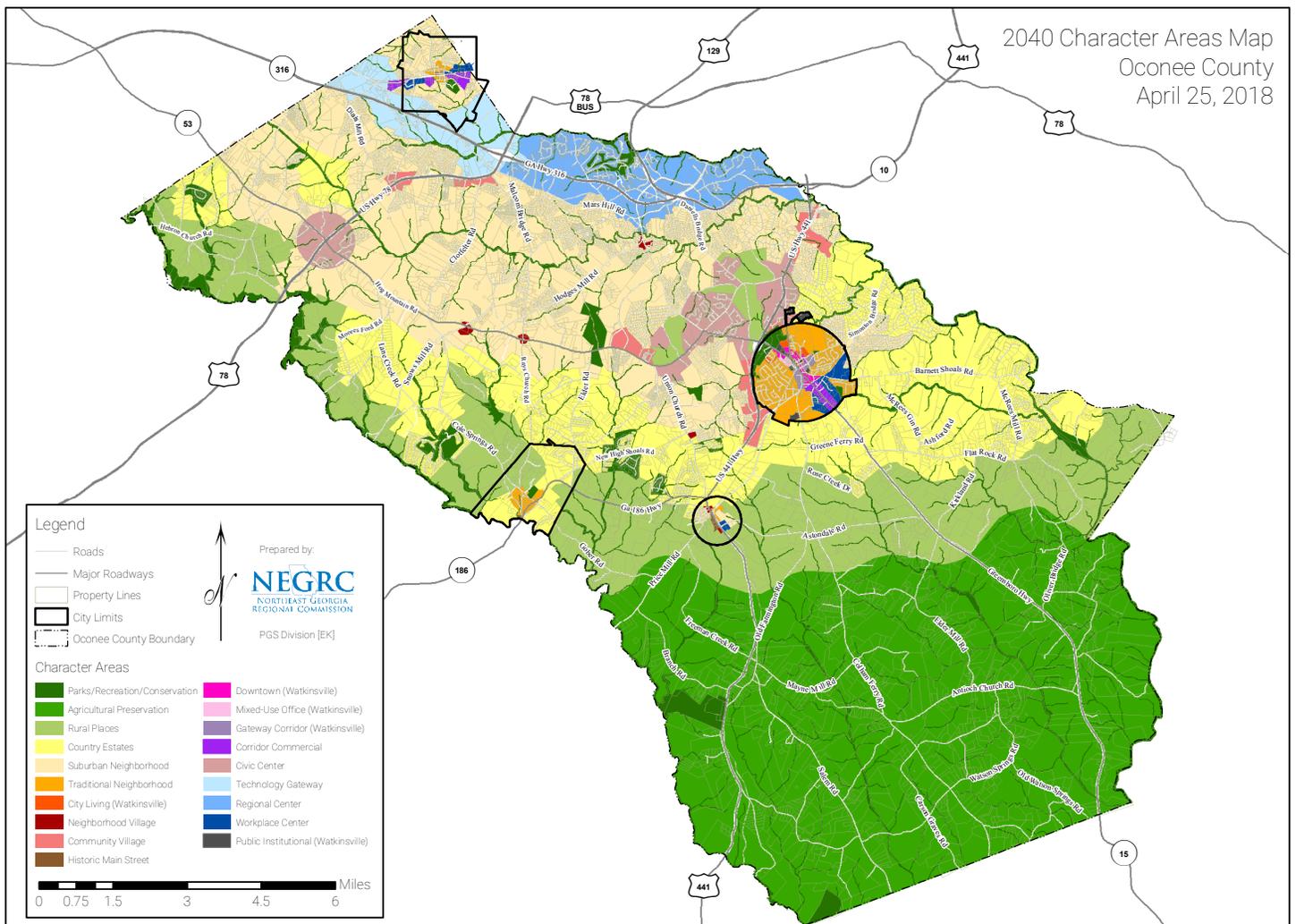
GROWTH THAT FITS THE VISION OF OCONEE COUNTY

Comprehensive Plan Update 2018

The Comprehensive Plan is the county's guiding document for decisions about land use, development, community improvement, and investment. It is a citizen-driven vision of the county's future development, which encourages appropriate business development at key identified nodes in the central and northern parts of the county, while preserving the rural character of the southern part of the county. The Comprehensive Plan is updated every ten years based on input from the public, the Comprehensive Plan steering committee, and local government officials. In 2018, we undertook our latest update, and have developed a plan that will guide our community over the next decade.

Goals include:

- Promoting growth that builds lasting value in our community by enhancing or complementing the existing character of the area



- Promoting economic activity to generate work opportunities by recruiting, supporting, and retaining a range of employers from local and small businesses to major employers that will strengthen the tax base and improve quality of life
- Building and improving a multi-layered transportation network that facilitates safe access for all forms of transportation
- Ensuring that the water, sewer, and internet infrastructure needs of the current and future population remain served by safe, efficient, and cost-effective systems
- Supporting a network of parks, recreational facilities, and natural areas that meets the needs of area residents, and enhances the quality of life

View the Comprehensive Plan in its entirety at www.oconeecounty.com/CompPlan.

2018 Zoning & Code Enforcement Stats

Zoning Cases

- Rezone Cases: 11
- Special Use Cases: 4
- Variance Cases: 17

Building Permit Approval

- Single Family Starts: 309
- Commercial: 143

Construction Plan Approval

- Commercial Site Development Plans: 23
- Residential Subdivision Construction Plans: 4
- Residential Final Plats: 13
- Residential Administrative Plats: 78

A New Direction for Economic Development

Appropriate economic development is vital to the ongoing health of our community's economy. Oconee County is partnering with the Oconee County Chamber of Commerce for economic development services. This partnership allows the county to leverage the Chamber's vast expertise in the business community to take the lead in responding to requests for information and to build relationships with key site selectors. The Chamber will develop an economic development strategy, including targeted industries, that will be an ideal fit for Oconee in concert with the citizens' vision in the Comprehensive Plan. This structure will provide for greater involvement, reduced public spending, and more accountability. We are looking forward to seeing what this great partnership will bring to our community!

Tourism

Drop into the Welcome Center, located at 21 North Main Street in Watkinsville, to learn about all the county's upcoming events and local attractions.

Be sure to save time to check out the historic Eagle Tavern Museum, which was featured in the December 2018 issue of Early American Life Magazine, while you are there.

Last year a total of 3,916 visitors from 25 states and 8 countries visited the Welcome Center and Eagle Tavern Museum. Check out the tourism website VisitOconee.com for all the latest news on what's going on around town!



STRATEGIC GOAL 3: SMART INFRASTRUCTURE

DEVELOP FAR-SIGHTED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS THAT MEET THE COUNTY'S NEEDS NOW, AND GOING FORWARD



New Fire Station 8 Grand Opening

The new \$2.1 million SPLOST-funded Fire Station 8, located at 1600 Virgil Langford Road, opened in December and now serves the busiest section of the county, responding to approximately one-third of all fire and medical calls in Oconee.

The 9,286-square-foot station features two drive-through fire bays and one additional bay for EMS vehicles, as well as a training mezzanine area and utility storage. The living

area includes 10 firefighter bunk rooms, restrooms with showers, a dayroom/training area, kitchen, watch office, laundry, and turn-out gear locker room.

The up-to-date facility replaces the previous Station 8, which was located at 1050 Oconee Connector, and will continue to meet the county's growing needs for fire service well into the future.

County Earns Improved ISO Rating

Oconee County received an improved ISO classification of 4/4X, effective April 1, 2019, through a cooperative effort between Fire Rescue, Water Resources, and 911 Communications. The new ISO rating has the potential to reduce insurance costs to residents and businesses. The average response time of Oconee Fire Rescue is 8 minutes.

All Oconee County Fire Rescue firefighters and medical responders are volunteers who are trained to a professional standard. These dedicated volunteers provide services to the residents and businesses of Oconee County that are worth more than \$6 million.

Fire Rescue Call Response Time

Type of Call	Number of Calls	Average Response Time
Structure Fires	16	7.31
Structure Fires - Out Upon Arrival	15	7.33
Structure Fires – Other Counties	1	N/A
Vehicle Fires and Farm Equipment	29	8.34
Vehicle Fires and Farm Equipment – Other Counties	2	N/A
Grass, Woods and Hay Fires	42	8.93
Alarm Activations	209	9.37
Smoke Scares	45	8.22
Control Burns	15	7.33
Haz-Mat and Power Line Calls	107	9.10
Automobile Accidents	221	6.62
Automobile Accidents - Other Counties	2	N/A
Non-Emergency Service Calls	33	N/A
Fire Calls Canceled Enroute	101	N/A
TOTAL CALLS	838	8.18 Minutes

Calls Creek Water Reclamation Facility

The new \$14.43 million Calls Creek Water Reclamation Facility went into service in August with an expanded capacity of 1.5 million gallons per day, more than doubling the capacity of the previous plant. The plant employs state-of-the-art treatment techniques, which result in improved water quality.

Looking ahead, Calls Creek is capable of expansion to 3 million gallons per day to meet future needs, and the county has already acquired the property necessary for this expansion. This land will also provide a future passive park and river access for the community.



Smoke Testing & Maintenance Program

Water Resources initiated a Smoke Testing & Maintenance Program in 2018 to identify sewer inflow and infiltration issues. Results from smoke testing will be used to develop a maintenance strategy for existing lines. In addition, more than 3,000 fire hydrants were inspected and any needed maintenance was performed following the inspections.

Roads

Phase I of the Mars Hill road widening has been completed, and the Mars Hill Tree Planting Project began in the spring of 2019! A total of 761 trees have been planted to beautify the Mars Hill Corridor. University of Georgia Professor Emeritus and tree expert Dr. Michael Dirr selected the tree species for this \$385,000 project, which was funded by the Industrial Development Authority for the benefit of the community.

- Osborne Road was realigned and paved to provide access to Dove Creek Elementary School
- Astondale and Meriweather Drive were repaired and resurfaced with SPLOST funds and a GDOT Local Maintenance Improvement Grant

Sanitation & Recycling

- Total number of customer visits – 59,499
- Customers with Pay as You Throw bags – 22,839
- Customers with recyclables – 42,779



STRATEGIC GOAL 4: QUALITY OF LIFE

CULTIVATE OCONEE COUNTY'S EXCELLENT QUALITY OF LIFE

Parks & Recreation

Better Sports for Kids Quality Program Provider

Have you seen this emblem on Parks & Recreation facilities or on our website? The Oconee County Parks & Recreation Department was named a Better Sports for Kids Quality Program Provider for 2018/2019 by the National Alliance for Youth Sports.



The Parks & Recreation Department earned this designation after undergoing a review process and meeting key requirements for written policies and procedures, volunteer screening, coach training, parent education, and accountability. The Parks & Recreation Department is committed to following nationally recognized standards and policies in the coordination of youth sports programs. For more information on our programs, visit www.oconeecounty.com/ocprd.

Veterans Park Field Expansion

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the \$2.5 million field expansion at Veterans Park on October 4. The project included three new multi-purpose fields with 320-foot fences, a concession and restroom building, more than 200 parking spaces, and a walkway.

The multi-purpose fields can accommodate senior baseball, fast-pitch softball, adult softball, football, lacrosse, soccer, and other field sports. Oconee County residents approved funding for recreation & park facilities in the 2015 SPLOST, and completion of multi-purpose fields at Oconee Veterans Park was made a top priority based on community feedback.



Parks & Rec Stats

- 7,500 plus program and user group participants
- 14,000 plus volunteer hours given
- 493 park rentals
- 627 county park acres managed
- 30,463 open gym/fitness check-ins
- 11 tournaments hosted

COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION

The Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission earned the Governor's Circle Award and President's Circle Award and has been hard at work with Dirty Dozen Road Cleanups and a variety of environmental events.

Other activities include:

- Bring One for the Chipper Christmas Tree recycling event
- Annual Great American Cleanup activities
- Annual county-wide litter index



SENIORS



The Oconee County Senior Center provides opportunities for healthy aging through social engagement, physical activity and well-being, civic involvement, creativity, and lifelong learning.

- 15,835 meals served at the Senior Center or via home delivery
- 26,557 total attendance at programs and activities
- 21 members transported 31,565 miles to and from their homes for services

OCONEE COUNTY LIBRARY AND BOGART LIBRARY



2018 was a huge year for the Oconee County Libraries!

- 265,046 library visits
- 48,019 program attendance
- 295,727 items checked out
- 29,664 computer sessions
- 20,278 wifi sessions
- 983 library cards added
- Bogart Library Expansion

Summer reading:

- 2,985 participants
- 84,594 total books read
- 36,587.5 total hours read

OCONEE COUNTY EXTENSION

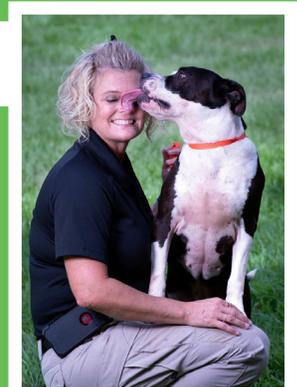
- Oconee 4-H served over 900 youth with hands-on learning focused on agricultural and environmental issues, leadership, communication skills, food and nutrition, health, and citizenship
- 401 young people competed in Project Achievement at the District and State levels
- Oconee 4-H recognized by the Northeast District for having the most winners at State Congress



ANIMAL SERVICES



- 488 dogs and cats adopted
- 124 dogs and cats reunited with owners
- 277 dogs and cats rescued or transferred
- Emergency calls answered 7 days a week



Oconee County
Board of Commissioners

23 N. Main Street
P.O. Box 145
Watkinsville, GA 30677
706-769-5120



John Daniell
Chairman
jdaniell@oconee.ga.us



Mark Thomas
Commissioner, Post 1
mthomas@oconee.ga.us



Chuck Horton
Commissioner, Post 2
chorton@oconee.ga.us



W.E. "Bubber" Wilkes
Commissioner, Post 3
bwilkes@oconee.ga.us



Mark Saxon
Commissioner, Post 4
msaxon@oconee.ga.us

Quick Contact List

ACTS	770-725-2330
Adult Literacy	706-552-0968
Animal Services	706-769-3956
Board of Commissioners	706-769-5120
Board of Elections & Registration	706-769-3958
Chamber of Commerce	706-769-7947
City Hall, Watkinsville	706-769-5161
Civic Center	706-769-3902
Clerk of Superior Court	706-769-3940
Code Enforcement	706-769-3907
Collection Site – Butler's Cross.	706-769-2916
Collection Site – Highway 15	706-769-3923
Collection Site – Highway 53	770-725-2421
Collection Site – Mars Hill Rd	706-353-3660
Communications	706-310-3556
Coroner's Office	706-769-2988
County Extension/4H	706-769-3946
DFCS	706-310-2260
District Attorney	706-769-3954
Eagle Tavern Museum	706-769-8730
EMA	706-310-3600
Environmental Health	706-769-7060
Family Connection	706-769-4974
Finance & Procurement	706-769-2944
Fire Department	706-769-3975
Health Department	706-769-3983
Human Resources	706-769-3938
Jail	706-769-3930
KOCBC	706-310-3560
Landfill – Macon Highway	706-769-3915
Library, Watkinsville	706-769-3950
Library, Bogart	770-725-9443
Magistrate Court	706-769-3940
Parks & Recreation - HCM	706-769-3965
Parks & Recreation - OVP	706-769-3965
Planning Department	706-769-3910
Police, Watkinsville – Non Emer.	706-769-7891
Post Office, Watkinsville	706-769-6980
Probate Court Office	706-769-3936
Probation Office – Providence	706-310-4466
Property Appraisal Office	706-769-3921
Public Works Department	706-769-2937
Road Department	706-769-3912
Sanitation (Public Works)	706-769-2937
Senior Center	706-769-3979
Sheriff (Non Emergency)	706-769-5665
Sheriff (Administration)	706-769-3945
Stormwater Mgt. (Public Works)	706-769-2937
Tax Commissioner	706-769-3917
USDA, FSA, NRCS	706-769-3990
Water Resources	706-769-3960
Welcome Center	706-769-5197