

**GEORGIA STATE SENATE  
BUDGET AND EVALUATION OFFICE**

**Chairman's Column**

August 27, 2009

**State Websites**

The internet continually provides new opportunities for citizens to interact with state government. Highlighted below are a few of the many websites state agencies have developed to assist citizens in accessing information.

Federal Stimulus Dollars Spent in Georgia- <http://stimulusaccountability.ga.gov/>

For updated information on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act here in Georgia, the Governor's Office has developed a stimulus accountability website for the state. For a quick overview of the Recovery Act, the homepage is regularly updated with the total amount of funds received by the state in each policy area. For more detailed information, most state agencies have developed implementation strategies, which are posted on the website. There is also information on bonding opportunities, the projected tax credit impact, and a detailed description of each stimulus fund. For those that want to do a little analysis of their own, there is a link to an excel database which includes extensive information on each fund source available to the state.

Open Georgia - <http://www.open.georgia.gov/>

For those interested in the inner workings of state government, Open Georgia is the place to start. Developed to help ensure transparency in government and meet the requirements laid out in SB 300, visitors can access state employee salary and travel reimbursements, state professional services expenditures, financial reports, and program reviews. The salary section is especially interesting, with the ability to search for specific state employees or by title and organization. Within the financial report section, there is a link to the state's Fiscal Year 2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, which provides a comprehensive financial overview of the state. For financial information on your local county, you can also look at the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts website. [www.audits.state.ga.us/](http://www.audits.state.ga.us/)

Conserve Georgia - <http://www.conservegeorgia.org>

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) went live with their new Conserve Georgia website earlier this week. The updated site is now more interactive, offering a personalized experience for visitors. The website caters to individual needs by allowing visitors to select their viewing preference: Individual, Business or Organization, Educator, State or Local Government, and Agriculture or Forestry Business. Once a preference is chosen, the visitor is taken to the main website where information is provided based on their needs. The new site also links to partner websites, offers three additional conservation topics (air, recycling, and wildlife), and a Success Spotlight section providing success stories on how other people have implemented conservation tools into their lives and organizations. While informative, the website is also fun to explore allowing visitors to choose between four Georgia sceneries.

Sales Tax Information by Month - <https://etax.dor.ga.gov/STDistribution/Default.aspx>

For those interested in state sales tax information, the Georgia Department of Revenue has developed a tool to access sales tax information by county. Information is updated monthly and visitors have the ability to access data from as far back as January 1999. If you are only looking for information on a specific city, the system allows visitors to select a jurisdiction within the county. Once your parameters are chosen, the site prepares a personalized report which can be exported in a variety of different formats.

Road Projects - <http://www.dot.state.ga.us>

Curious what that project is on your commute home? The Georgia Department of Transportation's (GDOT) website allows visitors to search and view construction project information by interstate, state route and region. By accessing the GDOT homepage and using the Quick Links list at the bottom right-hand corner of the screen, visitors can click on the Projects link to search projects around the state. Once a project is selected, summary information is displayed. For example, visitors can see the description of the project, the cost, expected completion data, and contractor information. The website also allows users to submit comments directly to GDOT regarding a specific project.

Offender Search - <http://www.dcor.state.ga.us/GDC/OffenderQuery/jsp/OffQryForm.jsp>

The Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) provides an offender search database accessible through the department's homepage. Visitors can search for offenders by their GDC ID number, the offender's name, or from generic criteria such as age, offense, and conviction county. The search not only provides information on currently incarcerated offenders, but also past offenders. Once an inmate's record is found, the database provides additional information such as the offense, release date, or tentative parole month as well as the incarceration history, prior sentences, and current sentences. This is particularly useful for victims of a crime and their families, who can regularly check for updated information. The department, in partnership with the State Board of Pardons and Paroles, also operates a telephone system for victims to receive up to date information and to be notified when their offender is released. That toll free number is 1-800-593-9747.

#### **ADDITIONAL WEBSITES YOU MAY FIND USEFUL:**

Campaign Disclosure Reports, Late Filers Reports, Lobbyist Reports, Vendor Gift Reports  
[www.ethics.georgia.gov](http://www.ethics.georgia.gov)

Legislation by subject and by legislator. Look up any Georgia law by accessing the Official Code of Georgia free of charge  
[www.legis.ga.gov](http://www.legis.ga.gov)

Elections results in previous years and currently. All the returns-local and state elections.  
[www.sos.ga.gov/Elections](http://www.sos.ga.gov/Elections)

State Directory of phone, fax numbers, mailing addresses and some email addresses of government agencies and officials  
[www.spa.ga.gov](http://www.spa.ga.gov)