

On April 21st, I had the opportunity and privilege to attend my first County Commissioners' Convention and Training Session in Savannah. (Savannah has a particular appeal to me since my wife, Pam, and I were married there in 2002.) I was very pleasantly surprised at how informative and useful this convention was. It exposed me to several different ways of doing county business and performing county jobs that I hope to be able to explore in the near future. My training session focused on Open Records and Open Meetings and helped me gain a greater understanding of their application in county government.

In county specific matters, we find our selves 1/3 of the way through Spring of 2007, and our year to date rainfall in Fannin county is roughly half of the average amount we receive. Not only is this a bad omen for this year's vegetable and flower gardens, but we find ourselves in an elevated risk area for forest fires. As of April 30th, Fannin County is listed by the US Forest Service as being in a "high" threat situation.

As we can see from the effort used to control the state of Georgia's largest forest fire on record down in Waycross, the lack of rain has the potential to make this year's fire season one of the worst in memory. Please use extreme caution when you are burning brush, paper goods or construction materials. Our local volunteer fire department has been called upon to extinguish several multiple acre fires already this year. Call your local office of the Georgia Forestry Commission or United States Forest Service for burning information and permits. Remember, careless burning not only endangers property, it can endanger lives.

Remember too, especially if you are on one of our city water systems, to follow watering guidelines. Call your local water authority if you have questions about these guidelines. While we live in an area blessed with large amounts of clean water, we all have a duty to maintain proper water usage so that we don't find ourselves in a future situation where our water quality is threatened.

Lastly, I would like to thank our new Animal Control facility manager, John Drullinger, for the fine work he is performing in his new position. I have received many compliments about his professionalism and expect nothing but continued improving performance from our Animal Control department. He is currently recovering from some minor surgery and all of us in Fannin County government send him our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

As always, you can find out more information about Fannin County government departments by visiting our website at www.fannincountyga.org.

Other important websites related to this week's article:

Chattahoochee – Oconee National Forest - www.fs.fed.us/conf/welcome.htm

Georgia Forestry Commission - www.gfc.state.ga.us/index.cfm