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## Looking back at 2016: The year in review

By Morgan Riley  
For The Crier

The year past in Dunwoody and Brookhaven was highlighted by a resurgence in development, symbolized by plans for the mega-project, High Street in Dunwoody, right down to Brookhaven's tentative work on revitalizing Buford Highway.

In the school system, Brookhaven traded land for a new 900-student elementary school at Skyland and Dunwoody did the same for a new 900-student Austin Elementary. The school system also set tenta-

tive plans to expand Dunwoody and Chamblee high schools and build a new Cross Keys High in Brookhaven while converting the current site to a middle school.

John Ernst was sworn in as the new mayor of Brookhaven while the first-year mayor of Dunwoody, Denis Shortal, ran afoul of the Georgia Attorney General for an illegal secret meeting that spawned a policy against homeowners that has been suspended.

2016 began with the path of a development, Crown Towers, that caused lots of discussion but has been pulled off the table. The Dunwoody Homeowners' Asso-

ciation voted to conditionally support the proposed Crown Towers project request, the development that sought to bring 380 condominium units or apartments to Perimeter Center.

After revisions from the developer about the project emerged, the DHA held its position and voted 8-5 to make the case before city council, however, before it was scheduled to be discussed at a council meeting in May, the developer withdrew its application.

In other development news, detailed renderings revealed plans for the massive High Street project. The project was approved by DeKalb County before Dunwoody became a city but was stalled by the Great Recession. Construction is expected to begin this year, with completion of the first phase estimated in 2020 or 2021.

The first phase will include an office tower, parking garages, retail space, four seven- to 12-story apartment buildings and a 30-story residential tower. Three-story town homes will front the project on Perimeter Center Parkway.

The city fulfilled another promise to its citizens this year with the grand opening of Perimeter Park, the city's newest park, located on Shallowford Road at Perimeter Court on the site once occupied by the Emory Dunwoody Medical Center in April.

One of the most successful economic development officers in Georgia resigned from the presidency of the Perimeter Community Improvement Districts in September. Yvonne Williams led the growth of the PCIDs in DeKalb and Fulton counties the last 17 years, seeing it become an office market with 150,000 employees and home to many Fortune 500 headquarters.

The Dunwoody Police Department worked through the year to conduct undercover commercial sex trafficking operations

## Ellis' last hurrah: a fix for water bill mess

By Dick Williams  
For The Crier

In one of his last official acts as DeKalb County's chief executive, Burrell Ellis has written an open letter to the citizenry, trying to add clarity to a confused billing mess at the water department.

The problems of over-billing, misreading of meters, failure to bill for months and arbitrary cut-offs of service have spread over the last two years, vexing the county commission.

Lee May, the interim chief executive while Ellis was suspended and in prison, already had declared a moratorium on water service cutoffs and announced a switch to newer, more accurate meters.

Ellis' conviction for bribery and perjury was overturned last month and he was returned to office to serve until Friday. Michael Thurmond, a landslide victor at the polls in November, took office this week.

In his letter, Ellis admitted the county watershed department chaos, saying it began with a transition from outdated meters to newer technology.

"In many instances," he wrote, "the data which was supposed to identify newer technology meters was lost, causing the billing software to 'misread' information from the traditional meter."

The county executive said that by August of last year, the num-

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## Rotary sends cheers to USO



The Rotary Club of Dunwoody provided lunch and snacks to approximately 75 military personnel and their families at the USO at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport over the holidays. With a major donation of food and water by Rotarian Charlie Augello and the East 48th Street Market and fruit from Mike Jardina, several members of the club served lunch. Rotarians who participated were, Geoff Roper, Anne Glenn and her husband Clark, Rick Otness, Harvey Rosenzweig and his wife Naïne, George Stewart and his wife Amy, Bob Freeman and his wife Grace and their sons, and Larry Domenico and his daughter Katie. Dunwoody resident Larry Domenico organized the event for the club. The club will be back serving their countrymen and women on April 7 and December 1 in 2017.

## 'Game on' capital campaign in full swing for DHS

By David Knight  
For The Crier

Dunwoody High alumni, parents and friends are being asked to join a capital campaign to raise \$2 million to improve athletic facilities.

The Dunwoody High fields, track, and outdoor athletic facilities as a whole need extreme renovations in order to give students a place to hold events for football, lacrosse, softball, soccer, track and band. But the DeKalb school system has offered no budget help, save for discussion of artificial turf on the field used by several sports.

The capital will be used in four stages of improvement and renovation, and a portion of the money will be allotted to a maintenance fund to keep the facilities in their best condition. Audra Anders, a member of the Capital Campaign Committee says "No amount is too small, if everyone in the DHS family

contributed 50 to 100 dollars, we would reach our goal in no time."

The current field shows holes, weeds, and spots where grass won't grow. It's dusty, beaten up, and thoroughly used. Senior football player Ryan Hicks stated "Sometimes at practice the dust will get really bad and we might even have to stop practice," he also said "I think if we had a new field we'd have a lot more kids coming out and we would be a better team."

Phase two involves outdoor lighting for the field and track so that students can use the facilities even when the sun isn't shining. Football and band practices could continue later into the evening, Cross country practice could safely run the track in the mornings, and all sports would be able to hold night games.

The third step of the final plan is making a place for spec-

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