



# Lowndes County Government 101

October 13, 2011

Lowndes County Administration Building  
Lunch & Learn Series – Program 3  
“Your Top 50 Answered”

# Mission Statement

**“To provide an efficient, effective and responsive local government to all citizens of Lowndes County while maintaining the financial strength to meet any contingency.”**

# Lowndes County Board of Commissioners



Ashley Paulk  
Chairman



Joyce E. Evans  
Commissioner  
District 1



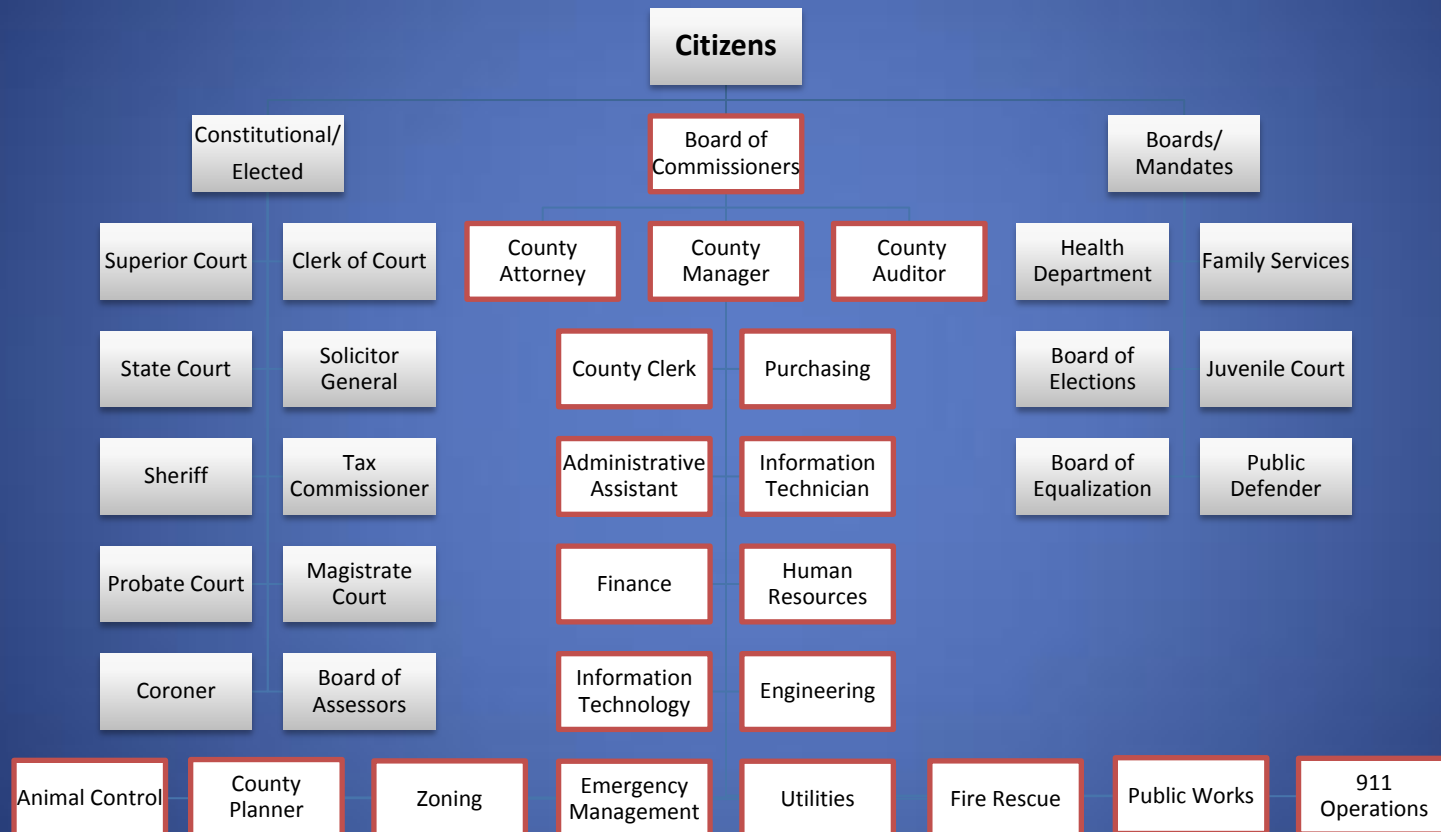
Richard Raines  
Vice Chairman  
Commissioner  
District 2



Crawford Powell  
Commissioner  
District 3

Additional information is available – [www.lowndescounty.com](http://www.lowndescounty.com)

# Organization & Structure



# What is the zoning/acreage of my property?

Lowndes County Zoning Department  
Administration Building – 2<sup>ND</sup> Floor  
327 N. Ashley St.  
Valdosta, GA 31601  
229-671-2424

Zoning Administrator – Carmella Braswell

# How do I request a Variance or Rezoning?

Rezoning and Variance requests may be made to  
Lowndes County Planning & Zoning.

Lowndes County Zoning Department  
Administration Building – 2<sup>ND</sup> Floor  
327 N. Ashley St.  
Valdosta, GA 31601

229-671-2424

# How can I receive down payment assistance?

Annually, Lowndes County considers application to the CHIP housing program.

The program provides down payment assistance and rehabilitation funding to qualified applicants.

For more information, contact Carmella Braswell, 229-671-2424.

# Does the County provide housing rehabilitation assistance?

Annually, Lowndes County considers application to the CHIP housing program.

The program provides down payment assistance and rehabilitation funding to qualified applicants.

For more information, contact Carmella Braswell, 229-671-2424.



# Why does my water smell like sulfur?

A noticeable taste can come from the chlorine that is added to the water to kill germs. A rotten-egg odor is caused by a smelly chemical in the water called hydrogen sulfide, Sulfur Water, this is a natural product in our water supply that comes from the Floridian Aquifer. Metallic tastes can come from copper that has dissolved from copper pipe and from rusted iron pipes that are used for plumbing inside the customer's home.

# Why is my sewer bill higher than my water bill?

Sewer rates are higher than water rates and the bill is based on the amount of water consumption that you use.

# How is my water tested? What rules are we governed under?

Lowndes County is governed by EPD and is required to uphold EPD compliance.

All Lowndes County wells are tested monthly.

# If I have my own well do I have to tie into County water?

No, as long as your well is functioning properly you do not have to tie in.

If your well is not functioning properly and you are within the service area, you are required to connect.

# How much does it cost to install a driveway?

For driveway/culvert costs, you may contact Lowndes County Public Works at 229-671-2700.

How much does it cost for a trash permit and where do I purchase one?

Trash permits are \$100.00 annually. The cost of the card is prorated at \$8.33 per month.

You may purchase a card from the payment window in the Lowndes County Administration Building, 1<sup>st</sup> floor.

# What are the hours for the Recycling Centers?

Sunday: 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Monday: 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday: 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Friday: 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Saturday: 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

# How much does it cost to rent the 4-H Camp and Civic Center?

Both facilities are rented by the Lowndes County Public Works Department,  
229-671-2700.

Rental costs are based on how much of the facility is rented, signed contracts and deposits are required.



# When will my road be graded?

Lowndes County roads are graded based on a specific route schedule. Weather conditions may impact this schedule.

Citizens are encouraged to report road conditions, by calling Public Works, 229-671-2700, and placing a work order.

# How can I get my road on the paving list?

Currently, SPLOST funds have been allocated by voters for road paving. A prioritized list has been approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Contact Engineering, 229-671-2424, to find out if your road is on the list. Staff can direct you in steps required to be considered for future funding.

Where can I get a copy of my  
marriage license?

Lowndes County Probate Court  
229-671-2650

# Where can I get a copy of my divorce decree?

Lowndes County Clerk of Court

327 N. Ashley St.-1<sup>st</sup> Floor

229-333-5127

How do I become a Notary or how  
do I get it renewed?

Lowndes County Clerk of Court

327 N. Ashley St.-1<sup>st</sup> Floor

229-333-5127

# Who do I talk to if I was summoned for Jury Duty?

Lowndes County Clerk of Court

327 N. Ashley St.-1<sup>st</sup> Floor

229-333-5127

# Where Do I apply for my Business License?

Lowndes County Occupational Tax Payment  
Window – 229-671-2534

# Who is my Commissioner?

Maps are made available on Lowndes County's website, [www.lowndescounty.com](http://www.lowndescounty.com).

Or, you may contact the Lowndes County Board of Elections at 229-671-2850, or Lowndes County Administration at 229-671-2400.



# How do I get a copy of a 911 call?

Fill out an open records request with the Office of the County Clerk.

911 will then contact the appropriate public safety agency to obtain permission to release the information.

Who do I call about my neighbors  
overgrown yard?

Lowndes County Code Enforcement  
229-671-2730

How do I find out how much my  
traffic citation is?

Where do I get information on the deed to my property?

Lowndes County Clerk of Court

327 N. Ashley St.-1<sup>st</sup> Floor

229-333-5127

# Where can I get a copy of a Birth/Death Certificate?

Lowndes County Health Department  
Vital Records – 245-2326

# Who do I call or where do I go to find my voting place?

After your county receives your voter registration form, you will receive a precinct card in the mail which will state the location of your polling place and your local, state, and federal districts. If you do not receive your precinct card within 30 days, contact the Board of Election's office at 229-671-2850 or check the Secretary of State Poll Locator at: <http://sos.georgia.gov/elections/polllocator/PollLocator.aspx>

## **Board Of Elections**

2808 N. Oak St.

Valdosta, GA

(229) 671-2850

# Where do I pay my property taxes or renew my car tag?

Office of the Tax Commissioner  
Lowndes County Governmental Building  
300 North Patterson Street  
Valdosta, Georgia 31601  
229-671-2579

# Where do I get my driver's license?

Georgia State Patrol Office

371 Gil Harbin Boulevard

Valdosta, Georgia 31601

229-333-8385



# Who do I talk to about Child Support Recovery?

You may contact your attorney, Georgia Legal Aid

or

Child Support Recovery, 877-423-4746.

# Who do I call If I see Illegal dumping of trash?

Lowndes County Code Enforcement  
229-671-2730

# How do I get a copy of minutes from a Commission Meeting?

Commission meeting minutes are made available online, [www.lowndescounty.com](http://www.lowndescounty.com), the meeting after they are approved by the Commission.

For minutes older than 2003, contact the Office of the County Clerk, 229-671-2400.

# How do I find out if a road has been closed?

Contact Lowndes County Engineering,  
229-671-2424

or

Lowndes County Public Information,  
229-292-6142.

# What is the phone number and location for Building Inspections?

This is a joint, City/County department. For inspections/permitting information for both the incorporated and unincorporated area, call 229-259-3506.

# Who do I call to dispute my property tax bill?

Board of Equalization  
229-560-4390

There is a window for registering disputes, contact the Board of Assessors, 229-671-2540, for more information.

# How do I sign up for CodeRed?

Visit Lowndes County's website, [www.lowndescounty.com](http://www.lowndescounty.com) or call Lowndes County Emergency Management at 229-671-2790.

This service is free to all Lowndes County residents and citizens are encouraged to sign up. The system will only be used in the event of an emergency or for test purposes.

# If we had a storm or natural disaster where do I go?

Stay tuned to local media outlets, visit the county's website, [www.lowndescounty.com](http://www.lowndescounty.com) and listen for CodeRed calls.

Sheltering is determined by the nature of the emergency.



# Where do I turn in my job application?

## How do I find out what jobs the County is offering?

- **Georgia Department of Labor**  
(229) 333-5211  
221 South Ashley Street Valdosta, GA
- [www.lowndescounty.com](http://www.lowndescounty.com)

# What volunteer opportunities do you have available?

For more information on volunteer or intern opportunities, contact County Clerk, Paige Dukes.

229-671-2400 or [pdukes@lowndescounty.com](mailto:pdukes@lowndescounty.com)

Who would I call if I were to see a discharge from a washing machine, pool, septic system, fuel etc. into the Lowndes County ditch or storm drains?

- Larry Miller, Environmental Compliance Director, 229-671-2400
- Dan Johnson, Stormwater Tech, 229-671-2400

Do farmers have to adhere to the Illicit Discharge Ordinance and or Erosion Control Ordinance?

No, Farmers are regulated under the United States Department of Agriculture they have there own set of guidelines.

I see people sometimes cutting trees in the wetlands, is this allowed?

Yes, with a special permit from the US Army Corp. of Engineers and as long as no stumps are removed.

# Where do I go to pay a traffic ticket?

This depends on the ticketing agency.

The Lowndes County Sheriff's Office accepts payment for tickets from Sheriff's deputies and the Georgia State Patrol, 229-671-2900.

The Valdosta Police Department accepts payment for tickets from Valdosta Police Officers, 229-242-2606.

# Are Lowndes County's Ordinances Available online?

This past budget, Lowndes County Commissioner's approved funding for a total codification and legal review of Lowndes County ordinances. This process is ongoing and is expected to be complete before the end of 2012. Once completed, all ordinances will be available online, in a searchable database. Currently, the most commonly referenced ordinances are available online.

# Is there a penalty for surrendering my pet?

No, Lowndes County Animal Welfare is glad to accept unwanted animals or animals that can no longer be cared for by their owners.

In fact, citizens are encouraged to give their animals up under these circumstances to eliminate cases of animal neglect which are preventable and can also carry criminal charges.



# Who told on me?

In the event a citizen reports an issue to code enforcement, animal welfare or calls 911 anonymously, every effort is made to protect the privacy of the reporting party.

In most cases, this information will be redacted from open records requests.

# Can I rent the historical courthouse?

In most cases, the answer would be no. The courthouse is available for events that are open to the general public.

It is important to remember that the building is still in use for some court cases and remains an active government building.

The county's liability insurance does not cover private activities and will not allow citizens on the roof.

# How do I address the Commission in a Commission meeting?

There is a form required that must be submitted to the County Clerk, prior to the Chairman calling the meeting to order.

The form is available online or you may come early to the meeting chambers and fill one out.

Citizens speak at the discretion of the Chairman. You are encouraged to schedule a personnel meeting with any county official, if you wish to address matters in another forum.

# How do I find out if a contractor has a business license?

Lowndes County Occupational Tax Office  
229-671-2534

# Are Lowndes County land regulations available online?

All ordinances related to land use, zoning and development are contained within Lowndes County's Unified Land Development Code.

This document is available online,  
[www.lowndescounty.com](http://www.lowndescounty.com).

Lowndes County's Technical Review Committee meets weekly and is available to assist you with these ordinances, 229-671-2424.

# How do I qualify to run for office?

Lowndes County Board of Elections

229-671-2850



Thank you for your interest in  
Lowndes County  
Government.

The next Lunch & Learn will be November 10, 2011.

[www.lowndescounty.com](http://www.lowndescounty.com)