

August 26, 2007
Marietta Daily Journal
Moving On in Atlanta traffic
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ATLANTA - Conversations about metro-Atlanta traffic can be as cluttered with acronyms and solution strategies as the area's roads are with cars.

On Monday, WSB-TV Broadcast Reporter Sally Sears will present the issue of congestion relief and highway safety as it's relevant to the most important audience, metro-Atlanta residents and drivers.

Ms. Sears interviewed Gov. Sonny Perdue as well as leaders from Community Improvement Districts (CID), the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, the Atlanta Regional Commission, public safety officials, bus drivers and riders, vanpool drivers and riders, and more to paint the big picture of what's being done and what more is needed to relieve Atlanta traffic.

The 16-county Atlanta region's population has topped four million, a population larger than that of 24 states, and officials have said the region now has the fourth-worst congestion in the country. Georgia as a whole is the fourth-fastest growing state in the country, yet Georgians pay fourth from the bottom for transportation improvements.

Perdue and others discuss with Ms. Sears solutions like toll lanes on interstates, where residents would pay about \$2.75 to ride in what now resembles high-occupancy vehicle lanes, but wouldn't require more than one person to be in a car.

"The (metro-Atlanta) Civic League's interest is in making sure everyone is informed and has a seat at the table when decisions are made," Ms. Sears said.

And the congestion issue is more than relevant for Cobb residents and workers.

According to Ms. Sears' interview with southeast Cobb-based Cumberland CID Chairman Tad Leithead, also senior vice president of development with Cousins Properties, access keeps businesses from leaving Atlanta.

"By increasing access, we've been able to preserve that (business) growth here," Leithead said. "I think there would be a lot more growth (elsewhere) had the CID not been formed and made the investments that it's made."

Connie Engle, Cumberland CID board treasurer and a partner with Childress Klein Properties, noted that the Commuter Club, which her CID funds and provides 19 vanpools from different areas of the city each day to the Galleria.

During the past 10 years, the club has cut 37 million miles from metro highways and prevented 75 tons of pollutants from entering the air. The club's programs and services

also have saved local commuters more than \$5 million dollars, not to mention about 10 minutes off every trip for vanpoolers.

Ms. Sears' report will air 8:30 p.m. Monday on Public Broadcasting Atlanta 30, which is channel 16 on most Comcast Cable operations.

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