

[12/26/00 - My last newsletter as Chairman of the Board of Commissioners](#)

**TRANSPORTATION AND ROADS:** There are many projects in various stages of progression and they are funded and scheduled in many different ways:

**Federal & State Projects:**

1. U S 441 widening between Watkinsville and the Athens Loop is nearing completion, hopefully by the first of 2001;
2. **Widening of U S 441 between Watkinsville and Madison (Interstate 20)** is still in the environmental assessment stage and because of limited state funding for GRIP projects keeps getting pushed further and further into the future. It needs completion for safety purposes (the '30's design curves have been involved in fatal accidents for decades) and the need to improve access to Interstate 20 for the entire region. Morgan and Oconee Counties need to continue to press for this project to be given higher priority because U S 441 is the route used by much of the state to come to Northeast GA.

**State and Local Projects:**

1. **GA 53-Mars Hill Widening from Watkinsville to GA 316** is in the engineering stage. ....
2. **Jennings Mill Parkway-Oconee Connector Linking:** The county has done some preliminary engineering and the State has contracted with the county to build this project with State and Federal funds .....
3. **Improvements to Simonton Bridge Road:** This road needs widening, lowering of hills, and lessening of curves for safety and traffic load reasons. It is scheduled in the long-range tier of State/Federal projects. Meanwhile, some areas can be improved, in phases, with local funding and the use of county road department personnel and equipment and local contractors.
4. **GA 15- U S 441 Connector - south of Watkinsville:** This project is in the long-range plan of ACORTS and will take years to be funded. At some point the county will have to start the engineering to get it going before development happens in its path. It will allow more through traffic to go around downtown Watkinsville.
5. **Bogart-GA 316 Interchange:** This project is long range although the county has done some preliminary engineering and the Development Authority has acquired much of the ROW. It has been approved by DOT for a future interchange for the upgrade of 316. The county, and commercial developers will need to help do parts in phases - similar to the Oconee Connector. It is vital to access to Bogart and the Recreation Complex in the area.

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[10/01/01 - US 441 WIDENING PROJECT INCLUDED IN GARVEE FUNDING](#)

**US 441 WIDENING:** The Governor's massive **GARVEE Bonds transportation initiative does involve U S 441 including the section between Watkinsville and Madison.** The engineers and consultants and DOT officials are struggling with the route

location in the area near Bishop. Surveyors were seen as far east as Old Bishop Road this summer. Some had heard that Senator Haines had intervened to direct the route away from the 'Horse Barn and Complex' on Astondale Road. I understand that Senator Haines has denied such involvement. **Some want 441 to go through Bishop in a 'narrowed down' section on existing Right of Way. State DOT folks say that just won't work.** This is an important route, locally, regionally and an important North-South state route. It needs improvement for the sake of safety and for improved travel times.

## AVOC

September 9, 2003

### **Perdue Announces More Transportation Projects- None in Metro-Athens**

Wendell Dawson, Editor, AVOC, Inc.

This list includes State Route 17 in Franklin County. This is an important north-south corridor for east-northern GA. The list still leaves out Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Jackson, Oconee, Walton and other area counties: including U S 441 through Oconee, Morgan and Putnam Counties. GA SR 15 in Oconee and Greene is not included.

Again, **the political strength of Metro-Atlanta and Rural South Georgia is very obvious.** The counties near the S C line are ably represented by Representatives Tom McCall of Elberton and Jeannette Jamieson of Toccoa who represents Franklin County. Senator Ralph Hudgens of Madison County represents Franklin also.

**We are glad for SR 17 but hope we can eventually get some funding from Perdue for GA 316 and U S 441. These are important corridors too.**

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[9-5-03 Governor Unveils \\$324 Million Highway Bond Projects--LITTLE IN NORTHEAST GA!](#)  
[4-24-03 - U S 441 Loss- Max Lockwood Will not Seek Reelection as Mayor](#)  
[09/30/02 - TWO MORE DEATHS ON U S 441 SOUTH IN OCONEE NEAR MORGAN LINE](#)

[11-27-05 Contractors Chosen by GA DOT for GA 316 and I -85 Interchange](#)

**AVOC has concern that the Engineering Companies have made a 'cottage industry' out of designing highway projects for local governments.** Some were done in Barrow but did not seem to bring the projects on University Parkway, especially at the Georgia Club- Barber Creek Road area.

Oconee County's Mars Hill Widening Project and Jennings Mill Parkway- Oconee Connector project have been in the bosom of Engineering firms since the late 90's. We have little on the ground to show for it. However, one can bet that huge sums of Transportation Funds have been spent on the projects. The engineering and costs seem to take on a 'life of their own'.

It takes local leadership to make things happen. Gwinnett has had that leadership in recent years.

[8-22-05 Northeast Georgia, Transportation Bill, Pork & Democrats](#)

[5-2-05 Major GA DOT Projects Underway in Area But Not Oconee County](#)

## AVOC

April 23, 2005

## GA DOT Major Projects Underway in Area But Not Oconee County

By Wendell Dawson, Editor, AVOC, Inc.

In recent trips to Commerce and Jefferson, I observed much grading and road work going on for U. S. 441 and 129. Both are being four-laned and both offer I-85 access to Athens area citizens. This will speed up the trip to Atlanta for many people. It will also promote more and bigger commercial development.

These same roads, along with GA 15 and GA 53 run through Oconee County. Not much is taking place in Oconee County on any of them. A few years ago, as Oconee Commission Chairman, *I took some regional chiding about all the road projects being in Oconee County, i.e.: GA 316, U S 441 from south of Watkinsville to the Loop; Epps Bridge Parkway etc..*

While such projects are funded and engineered by the State DOT, ***they can be influenced by local legislators and officials.*** That is how we got the *Interchange at GA 316 and U.S. 78, bridge and Interchange at GA 53 and Watkinsville By Pass; Sidewalks and urban design on the Oconee end of Epps Bridge Parkway*, the current local hot economic development spot in the area; etc. It took persistence and commitment of some local resources.

**For years, we pressed for completion of U S. 441 from Watkinsville to Madison and I-20. GA 15 needs widening and improving for much of the coastal and east Georgia traffic.**

**Our local representative (Bob Smith) has been very outspoken on GA 316 and tolls.** He represents Oconee County and part of Morgan County, where U. S. 441 is still an unsafe death trap. **Local officials need to get behind the U S 441 South widening project. Also, GA 15, a route to Jekyll Island, Savannah, Jacksonville, etc is lagging in Oconee County. It is on the southern most end of the Gainesville DOT District 1. It needs some aggressive local support.**

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[11-15-04 U S Highway 441 to be Widened in Clarke and Jackson Counties](#)

[9-10-04 U S 441 Corridor is Important to Northeast Georgia](#)

[4-4-04 Max Lockwood's Passing is Loss to Entire State -- U. S. 441 Advocate](#)

[9-9-03 Perdue Announces More Transportation Projects- None in Metro-Athens](#)