Cobb County was one of seven governments recognized by the Atlanta Regional Commission in January for leadership in implementing policies and practices that contribute to efficient and sustainable use of resources in metro Atlanta.

Cobb County was honored as a Silver Certified Green Community in ARC's four-year-old program. “The seven local governments the Atlanta Regional Commission recognized today are working hard to use resources wisely and well, and I commend them for their achievements,” ARC Chairman Kerry Armstrong said at the ceremony. “Their efforts are contributing to cleaner air, reduced water demand, less waste going into landfills and more. As a result, we have a cleaner, greener region.”

To achieve silver level during its recertification, Cobb replaced all 543 of its traffic signals, 220 school flashers and many pedestrian signals with LED lamps, saving 3.6 million kilowatt-hours of energy, 2,800 tons of CO2 emissions and $271,000 annually.

The Northwest Wastewater Treatment Facility provides reuse water to the county’s Cobbstone Golf Course for irrigation. The total reuse water sent to the golf course was 71.7 million gallons for 2012, which translates to a monthly average of 6 million gallons, or a daily average of 199,000 gallons per day.

Cobb County also partnered with the Master Gardeners program to create and offer the Green Meadow’s Preserve Community Garden to the public. The preserve is a natural area dedicated to community uses, historic preservation and education in west Cobb. The county provides discounted water to the Mableton Community Garden at the historic Mable House.

The Cobb County Green School Initiative is a cooperative effort between Cobb County Water System, Keep Cobb Beautiful and the Cobb County PARKS Natural Resources Unit to encourage environmental education in schools. The program has grown from eight schools and 126 teachers in the 2007-2008 school year to 32 schools and 449 teachers in the 2011-2012 school year. During 2011-2012 Green Schools represented more than 3,710 hours of environmental education, reaching more than 13,500 students. Cobb County also developed the PEACH Roads certification program to integrate sustainability principles into transportation projects.

The first PEACH Roads project, east Cobb sidewalks, provided expanded pedestrian and bicycle access for the area, reused topsoil onsite, utilized retaining walls to minimize environmental impact and served as a valuable link in the county’s trail master plan.

Complete information about ARC’s Green Communities Certification Program, including the measures each community implemented, is available on the agency’s Web site at www.atlantaregional.com/greencommunities.

The list of services provided by Cobb County is a long one. Consider just how extensive its support is, not including law enforcement, fire and emergency services, roadwork, courts, libraries, recreation events and parks maintenance.

For example, Cobb County helps educate the public. Our outdoor educational classes saw more than 20,000 students last year. This program allows toddlers to adults to learn more about the environment and the impacts people can have on our surroundings. Our 4-H programs through the UGA Extension Service helped more than 1,300 kids last year. Cobb government also helps keep your neighborhoods nice. Community Development ensures your quality of life is maintained. It helps cleanup eyesore properties, seeks public input on zoning issues and ensures homes and buildings are properly constructed.

Cobb even offers convenience. Many services are now available online at cobbcounty.org. You can order passes for Cobb Community Transit, locate your property tax bill, download maps of your property and the surrounding area, find your nearest police station, watch commission meetings and learn how your taxes are being spent.

Litter, lost animals and code violations are just some of the difficulties you can have us fix by going through the Web. For non-emergency Department of Transportation problems, such as potholes, we have a new smart phone and Web based tool, YourGOV, which allows you to submit service requests.
Senior events to build awareness

Cobb County Senior Services will hold events on aging awareness during the next few months, starting with an event cover “Elder Abuse: Financial, Emotional and Physical Exploitation” 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 4, at the Board of Commissioner’s meeting room, 100 Cherokee St., Marietta. Cobb County District Attorney Vic Reynolds will give an overview on elder abuse and discuss how people can help stop it.

The next event, rescheduled from February, will discuss “Dementia 101” 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 18, at the East Cobb Senior Center, 3332 Sandy Plains Road. Dr. Gary Figiel, a leading Southeastern geriatric psychiatrist, will discuss Alzheimer’s and the difference between it and dementia. On Tuesday, April 8, “Housing Options” will be the main topic at 7 p.m. at the Senior Wellness Center, 1150 Powder Springs St., Marietta. The speaker will be LeadingAge Georgia President Walter Coffey.

Contact agingbydesign@cobbcounty.org for more information.

Nonprofit groups must attend sessions

All nonprofit organizations with 501c3 designation that serve Cobb residents are asked to attend a meeting on the availability of funds from the Cobb County Nonprofit Grant for Fiscal Year 2015/2016. Due to changes within the application, attendance is mandatory. There will be two presentations. The first will be held 1-3 p.m., Feb. 25, at the Mansour Center, 995 Roswell St., Marietta. The second will be held 10 a.m.-noon, Feb. 27, at WellStar Development Center, 2000 South Park Place, Atlanta. Staff of the Cobb Community Collaborative and Cobb Finance Department will be present to answer questions about the application and review process.

Bluebird walks to help support project

Educational “walk and talk” tours will be held in the coming weeks to support the Bluebird Trail in west Cobb at the Green Meadows Preserve Park. The Bluebird Walk and Talk Tour will be held at 10 a.m. on Feb. 10, Feb. 22 and March 28. The park is located at 3780 Dallas Highway in Powder Springs. For further info, call 404-202-8755 or contact jimbearden@bellsouth.net.