The 15th annual Public Safety Appreciation Week began with the kick-off breakfast honoring public safety personnel at Cobb Galleria Centre Monday, Oct. 6.

Cobb County Police Officer Charles Vill was awarded the Medal of Valor, the highest award recognizing an individual for an act of bravery in a life-threatening situation.

In February, Vill was shot five times by the driver of a vehicle he pulled over. Despite being seriously wounded, he maintained his tactical awareness. He acted quickly, moved to cover out of the line of fire, maintained control and provided clear and accurate descriptions and directions over the radio which ultimately led to the capture of his assailant.

According to his nomination, Vill frequently parks his patrol car and walks high crime neighborhoods and business areas on foot. He makes contacts with multiple residents and often thwarts criminal activity and apprehends felons. He also interrupted a burglary in progress in June 2013.

Acworth Police Department Agent Kyle Arnold was named the Public Safety Employee of the Year. Arnold, currently assigned to MCS Narcotics, is one of the first entry officers when serving high risk warrants. This year alone, he has participated in the service of 15 to 20 high risk warrants. Arnold has handled major drug cases with high-level drug dealers.

Marietta Police Officer Paul Reynolds won the 2014 Award of Merit. In January, Reynolds provided emergency treatment to a seven-month pregnant woman suffering from a gunshot wound to the leg. His tourniquet not only stopped the bleeding, but moved her broken femur back into place.

Smyrna Police Officer Tom Rooney was also honored with the Award of Merit for his actions during an apartment fire where he went door-to-door, evacuating people from the building. His actions were credited with saving at least 17 lives.

Cobb County Police Det. Tom Bastis won the Distinguished Achievement Award, which recognizes an individual whose service and performance has exceeded the realm of the job. Bastis has worked for the Cobb County Police Department since 2003, serving more than five-and-a-half of those years within the Crimes Against Children Unit. As a senior detective, he is known for his professional demeanor and the meticulous care he puts into each of his cases.

Public Safety Appreciation Week, which ran through Oct. 12, was sponsored by the Cobb County of Chamber of Commerce. For more information, visit www.cobbchamber.org/publicsafety.
Improvements on Windy Hill

Cobb County, the Cumberland Community Improvement District and other partners kicked off $48 million in improvements for Windy Hill Road at a groundbreaking ceremony Oct. 20.

U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson was the keynote speaker, as this event marked the start of the two-and-a-half year construction period on Windy Hill Road between Cobb Parkway and Powers Ferry Road.

“The improvements on Windy Hill Road are moving Cobb County forward,” Cobb County Department of Transportation Director Faye Dimassimo said.

“These efforts will not only improve traffic flow on Windy Hill, but will make the roadway safer for our residents. We are excited about the future of the Windy Hill Road corridor.”

The five projects – one from the 2005 SPLOST and four from the 2011 SPLOST – will transform a 1.95-mile stretch of Windy Hill Road.

Improvements will include a diverging diamond interchange over Interstate 75, new medians and pedestrian enhancements. The work is scheduled for completion in spring 2017. In total, the five projects are projected at more than $48 million.

“This project is part of $2 billion in public and private investment under construction in and around the Cumberland area,” said Malaika Rivers, executive director of the Cumberland Community Improvement District. “It is illustrative of the proactive planning and execution the state, county and CID are all about.”

For updates on the Windy Hill Road construction, please visit www.CobbDOT.org.

Charity for seniors not just on holidays

Cobb Senior Services has launched Christmas365 (formerly known as Senior Santa) as a way to connect the needs of seniors in Cobb County with the generosity of the community on a year-round basis. Your gift to Christmas365 may be made any time during the year, not just during the holidays.

Christmas365 provides special request items and generic gifts to seniors who are experiencing financial issues and need assistance. Each year, care managers identify clients who would benefit from having such things as household appliances, special medical equipment, nutritional supplements or clothing. Often, these seniors are isolated from family and community or are otherwise vulnerable. For more info, call 770-528-5364.

Please send checks (payable to Cobb Senior Services) or gift certificates to: Cobb Senior Services: Christmas365 P.O Box 649, Marietta, GA 30061

For a list of items needed and/or to make a financial donation, please visit www.CobbSeniors.org.

Cobb Water wins environmental award

Cobb Water System was recently honored with a 2014 WaterSense Partner of the Year award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Cobb’s Water Efficiency Program was recognized for its commitment to water conservation and efforts to educate Americans about WaterSense. WaterSense partners helped Americans save 271 billion gallons of water in 2013 alone. Every year, a select few partners are recognized for their significant program contributions. This is Cobb’s third WaterSense Promotional Partner of the Year award.

New veterans office offers services

U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson, state and Cobb County officials cut the ribbon on the new Marietta Veterans Field Service Office on Oct. 28. The new office at 1150 Powder Springs St., Suite 350, provides a local bureau for veterans to receive benefits counseling and claims assistance. During the event, Cobb County Chairman Tim Lee also announced the future construction of a veteran’s memorial on the location’s property.