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Footnotes Issue #88: October 17, 2014

A Historic Ballot, Vote Early or November 4th

Georgia is making headlines across the nation with the competitive races at the top of our ticket. The outcome of these races could reflect the growing momentum of our voting population becoming younger and more diverse. At the top of the ballot, there are major gubernatorial and Senate races. The tightness of the polls and the Libertarians in both make runoffs likely.

One of the ballot measures receiving the most attention is that of a small Georgia county, just south of the Atlanta area: Clayton County. This year, Clayton County voters have the opportunity to decide on joining the Metro-Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) and paying a 1% sales tax to fund service. Several factors have combined to make this a referendum of interest to observers all over nation. First, Clayton County had bus service starting in 2001, which County Commissioners voted to end in March 2010 citing budget shortfalls, despite outraged cries from residents. For four long years, a battle has been fought to restore transit--and now we are finally at what appears to be the end.



If Clayton voters approve this measure, it will be the first time MARTA has been expanded since the 1970s. Why is this so important? Georgia State Legislators have formed a [Joint Study Committee](#) to determine new funding sources for transportation projects. The focus of this conversation has been largely on roads, but the question of how to fund transportation alternatives has repeatedly surfaced. A "Yes" vote for MARTA not only will signal the public's restored faith in the transit system's ability to be a good steward of public dollars while providing quality service, it will also demonstrate that the public is willing to support funding transportation projects that have a direct, local impact on quality of life.

Finally, this election will mobilize a large group of voters that traditionally does not vote in the midterm election. This turnout has the potential to shift the outcome of other races on the ballot. The battle for transit in Clayton County is not over. With less than three weeks left until the November 4th election, we need your help getting the word out to Clayton residents about the MARTA Referendum, Early Voting, and Saturday & Sunday Voting. [On Saturday, October 25th, the Georgia Sierra Club will join several other groups canvassing neighborhoods in the county. Will you join us?](#)

Georgia Power Gets 515 MW of Solar Under Contract



Georgia Power has 515 megawatts of solar under contract! And it's cheaper than anyone could have expected, at \$.065/kilowatt hour, which is far less than their retail rates of around \$.10/kilowatt hour. The news is spreading fast, and even [Forbes](#) picked it up today.

Sierra Club Meetings

Wildlands Committee Meeting, Monday, October 20, 7:00 p.m.

Mike Murdock - Chair, murdock1@mindspring.com

RAIL Committee Meeting, Monday, October 27, 7:00 p.m.

David Emory - Chair, david.emory@gmail.com

Fundraising Committee Meeting, Thursday, October 30, 7:00 p.m.

Colleen Kiernan, colleen.kiernan@sierraclub.org

Smart Energy Committee Meeting, Monday, November 3, 7:00 p.m.

Cecilia Harris, ceciliaharris@gmail.com

Don't live in Atlanta? Check out our [Local Groups](#).

Other Events

October 23rd - The Future of Elections and Democracy: A Public Forum with FEC Vice Chair Ann Ravel - Incoming FEC Chair Ann Ravel wants to clean up America's elections system. Let's show her we've got her back! With public dissatisfaction over the influence of money in politics at an all time high, Federal Election Commission (FEC) Vice Chair Ann Ravel is setting out across the country to hear directly from the American people. [Click here to read more.](#)



October 27 or 28 - Sierra Club Exec Director Mike Brune Comes to Georgia To Campaign! - Stay tuned for details on the Georgia Chapter [Facebook Group](#), our Twitter handle [@gasierraclub](#) and our [website](#)! Our National Voter Education Fund announced today a GOTV effort that will reach 500,000 Georgia voters. Click [here](#) to read more!

November 7-9th - HemlockFest

- HemlockFest, hosted by the Lumpkin Coalition, is an annual festival held the first full weekend in November. The Festival and the proceeds from the festival are used to increase public awareness of Eastern and Carolina hemlock tree problems and to provide financial support for Area Colleges and Universities in their efforts to save the Hemlocks.



[Click here for tickets.](#)



November 15th - Sierra Club 101 - You joined the Sierra Club to help protect the environment -- now what? Come learn about the Sierra Club and how to get involved in our local efforts. Open to members and non-members alike--bring a friend! Please [register here](#) so we can bring enough refreshments for everyone!



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