



HENRY COUNTY
TAX COMMISSIONER'S

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

MICHAEL HARRIS, TAX COMMISSIONER

HENRY COUNTY • GEORGIA



STATE OF THE OFFICE



Greetings,

As we have all experienced, 2020 has been a year full of challenges, changes and new opportunities. The new fiscal year began with the implementation of the new motor vehicles software system, DRIVES. This is the State of Georgia's first system change in over fifteen years. The process ushered in a new era in

motor vehicle transactions. While the learning curve and the new system came with its challenges, the enhanced benefits, including the increased online options and speed and efficiency in processing transactions was quickly identifiable.

Soon after initiating the new motor vehicles software system, the County experienced an unprecedented cyber-incident in July 2019. For several months many of our operations were forced to revert to antiquated methods, including hand-written receipts and utilizing our last remaining operational typewriter. Our services were momentarily slowed, however they were never interrupted.

Then came the COVID-19 pandemic. Not since the 1918 Influenza Pandemic, has the world been faced with such a global crisis. The 'normalcy' of our world as we knew it has dramatically changed for each and every one of us. The COVID-19 crisis caused the closure of all county offices, including ours, for two full months.

It's been said that the true character of an individual or organization is reflected during times of challenge. I am so proud of and appreciative of the character shown by every

member of this office during each of these challenging events.

During the pandemic shutdown we remained committed to continuing to serve our residents and businesses in the best manner we could and were able to accomplish the following:

- All phone calls and emails were responded to within 24 hours
- Using limited staff members and working in shifts, we continued to process all online and mail-in transactions on a daily basis
- Implemented new safety measures at each office, including new partitions and screening procedures

The DRIVES software system proved timely as the additional online options offered were utilized by numerous residents and businesses during this time. It provided a safe and convenient means to handle motor vehicle transactions.


The past several months have taught us all a renewed lesson in resiliency and adaptability. These difficult times have underscored the incredible importance of patience, understanding and kindness. Now, more than ever, the Tax Commissioners Office remains committed to providing the best customer service possible and we will continue to identify ways to improve on all facets of our operations. The patience and understanding shown by our residents and businesses during this past year while we navigated over, around and through various obstacles is a testament to the greatness of our community.

If I, or any member of my staff can ever be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact us at either of our two locations.

Michael Harris
Tax Commissioner

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OUR MISSION



OFFICE OF THE
TAX COMMISSIONER

PROVIDE HENRY COUNTY
CITIZENS EXCELLENT
CUSTOMER SERVICE BY
HELPING THEM
UNDERSTAND AND
MEET THEIR
RESPONSIBILITIES WHILE
APPLYING THE TAX
LAW WITH INTEGRITY.

OUR VISION



OFFICE OF THE
TAX COMMISSIONER

HENRY COUNTY TAX
COMMISSIONER'S
OFFICE:
**THE
PREMIER TAX
COMMISSIONER'S
OFFICE IN GEORGIA**

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CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

The staff at this office has been professional and courteous at every visit. The best tag office I have encountered.

E. McGinnis



PURPOSE

The Henry County Tax Commissioner, as a duly elected constitutional officer, is responsible for billing, collecting and disbursing all monies levied as taxes for the County, School System, Water and Sewerage Authority and City of McDonough, the State of Georgia, as well as collecting fees for the cities of Henry County.

Property taxes, motor vehicle taxes, mobile home taxes, timber taxes and heavy duty equipment taxes are collected and disbursed. Additionally, this office collects excise taxes from the sale of alcohol, distribution of alcohol, hotel/motel rentals and Occupational Tax for businesses operating within the unincorporated area of the county.

The Tax Commissioner serves as the Ex-Officio Sheriff, assuming the total responsibility for collection of delinquent taxes.

VISION

Henry County Tax Commissioner's Office:
The Premier Tax Commissioner's Office in Georgia.

MISSION

Provide Henry County citizens excellent customer service by helping them understand and meet their responsibilities while applying the tax law with integrity

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

Lived here for 17 years. Love this office and employees.

J. Wittman

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Successful transition to the States new DRIVES software system
- Expanded our use of Social Media platforms to better disseminate information
- Increased On-Line and Kiosk renewals by over 120% during COVID closure
- Maintained Property Tax Collection rate at over 98%
- Maintained office functionality throughout the entire two month COVID closure, by utilizing on-line, mail-in and drop off services
- Added numerous safety measures throughout office to help ensure that our customers and staff members remain healthy and safe.

GOALS

- Update website to make more user friendly and provide greater access to On-Line service options
- Launch of dedicated Call Center to handle all phone calls in a more timely and effective manner
- Explore ways to expand services into the southern portion of the County to make it more convenient for our residents
- Continue to promote and encourage On-Line and Kiosk services to increase usage
- Continue with safety upgrades at office locations to ensure we are protecting the health and well-being of our customers and staff.

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS TO RENA COCHRAN & JOAN KELLEY

Rena, It's hard to believe that it has been 30 years since you came to work for me in the Tax Commissioner's office. I want to thank you for all that you did for our office but even more important is how you helped the citizens of Henry County. Government has a bad reputation when it comes to customer service, but I am proud to say that we had a great image in going the extra mile! You are a very special lady that made our office special. In closing, I want to thank you for all you did for me as an employee and being a very special friend. Kathy and I will always be there for you.

**Sincerely, Andy Pipkin,
Former Tax Commissioner**

As I think back to when I first had thoughts about running for Tax Commissioner, I recall two people who made the biggest impression: Andy Pipkin and Rena Cochran. I had known Rena from my days banking at Founder's Guaranty in McDonough.

Once elected, I quickly came to realize she had not changed! Rena was an asset and friend throughout my time as Tax Commissioner. She was a steadfast employee for the county and trusted advisor. It was easy for the two of us to work together because we both felt excellent customer service and expert knowledge was a must. I am eternally grateful for those God placed around me to guide me and teach me how to be a good Tax Commissioner. My only regret is the taxpayers of Henry County will likely never realize the heart in which Rena fulfilled her duties. I wish her all the

best in her retirement, undeniably well deserved!

Sincerely, David Curry, Former Tax Commissioner & State Revenue Commissioner

Congratulations Joan on your well-deserved retirement! On the behalf of all the many citizens you've served, and co-workers you've worked with I want to thank you for all the wisdom, compassion, understanding and professionalism you've provided over the past 20 years here at the Tax Commissioners office.

Your gift of encouraging others and your willingness to always help others is what has made this such a special place to work.

Thank you for all your years of service and friendship, and best wishes in your retirement.

Michael Harris, Tax Commissioner



Joan has worked In the Motor Vehicle Department hand and hand with the staff for the last 20 years. During that time

she has helped dealing with all types of issues and has been a great teacher to all. Her skills at getting to the heart of any problem and coming up with a solution is one of her biggest assets. More importantly she has the biggest heart for our community and will be missed by all.

Anna Saylor, Branch Manager



HOMESTEAD EXEMPTIONS

The Tax Commissioner annually mails new homeowners a booklet that contains important tax information about the following:

- Local and state homestead exemptions
- Preferential and conservation exemptions
- Information about other types of property



EXEMPTION AMOUNTS AND CODES

Code	Age	Exemption Amount	
L1		\$15,000 \$4,000 \$0	County School M&O School Bond, Water
L2	62	\$20,000 \$15,000 \$0	School M&O, School Bond County Water
L3	65	\$80,000 \$15,000	School M&O, School Bond County, Water
L6	68	\$120,000 \$15,000	School M&O, School Bond County, Water
L9	70	FULL \$15,000	School M&O, School Bond County, Water
L12	Totally Disabled (Under 65)	\$50,000 \$15,000 \$0	School M&O, School Bond County Water
L16	Veterans Disabled (Under 65)	\$90,364 \$90,364	School M&O, School Bond County, Water & City
L17	Veterans Disabled	65 \$90,364 \$90,364	School M&O, School Bond City, County, Water
L18	Veterans Disabled	68 \$120,000 \$90,364	School M&O, School Bond City, County, Water
L19	Veterans Disabled	70 FULL \$90,364	School M&O, School Bond City, County, Water
SS	Surviving Spouse (Of Service Member killed in action)	\$90,364 \$90,364	School M&O, School Bond City, Water & City
S6	Surviving Spouse (Of Peace Officer or Firefighter killed in line of duty)	FULL	County, School & Water

**NO EXEMPTIONS ALLOWED FOR CITY TAXES WITH THE EXCEPTION OF L16 –L19 VETERANS DISABLED AND SURVIVING SPOUSE

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

Very helpful and extremely quick. Also great atmosphere.

R. Bass

DID YOU KNOW?

What Motor Vehicle services are available online?

- You can renew your registration
- Pay insurance fines
- Cancel your registration
- Change your address
- Apply for a tag
- Check your insurance status
- Have a duplicate registration emailed to you
- View our lobby wait times



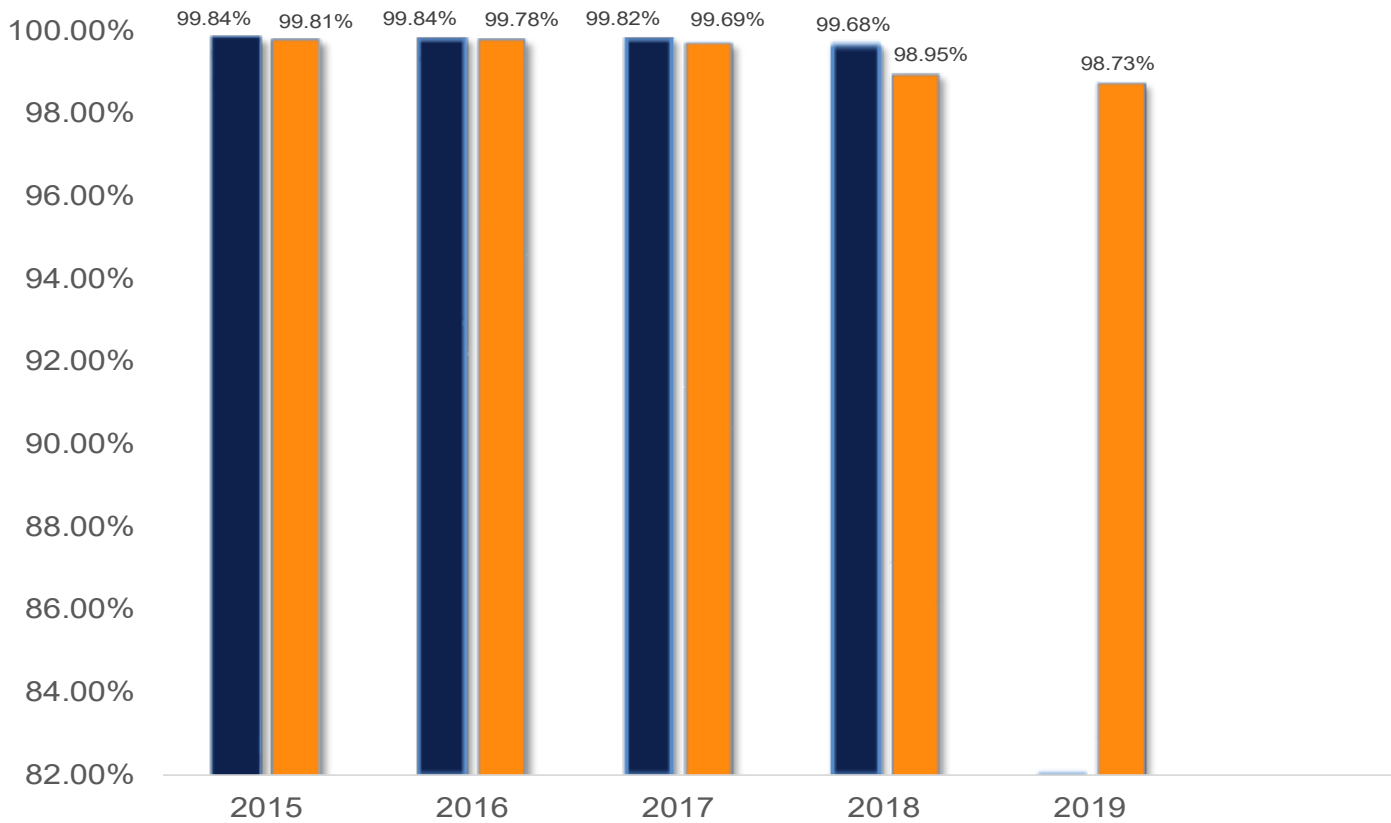
Property and Occupational Services Online

- Renew your occupational Tax online
- Print the business license application online
- Pay property Tax online
- Print Tax bill online
- Did you know we accept Cash, check, or charge (2.5%) convenience fee.
- Did you know you must schedule an appointment to submit your business license application.
- Did you know your driver's license has to reflect your henry county address for a home based business.







PROPERTY TAX COLLECTION RATE

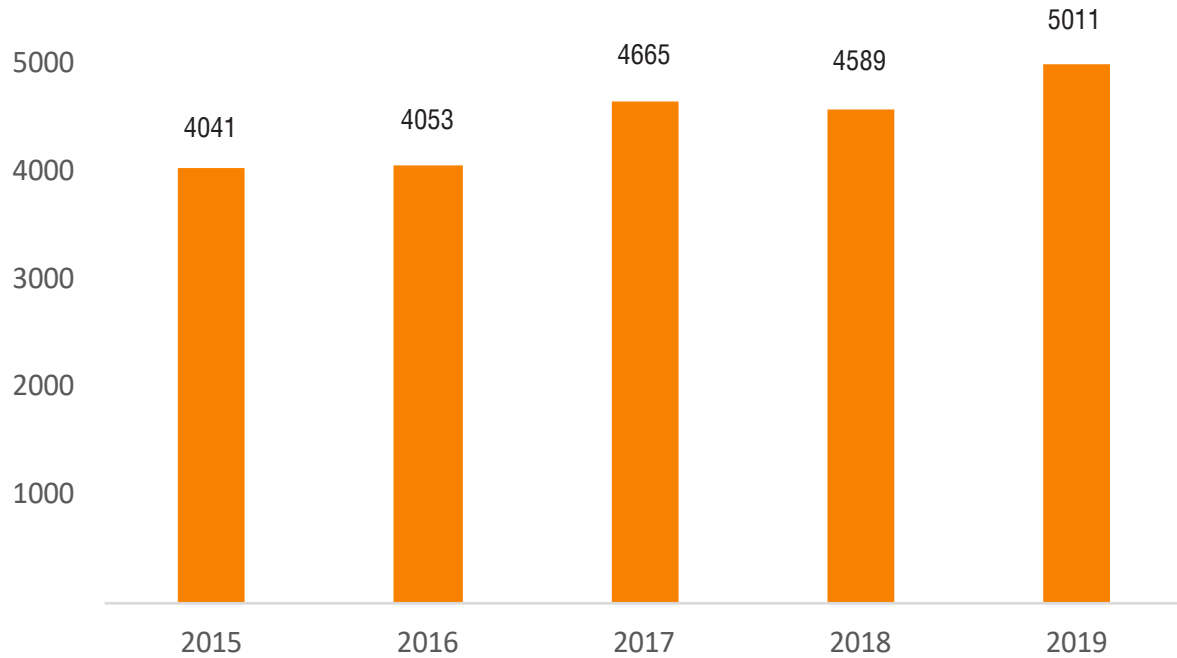


ABOUT

Over the past five years, collection rates have consistently exceeded 98 percent beyond the fiscal year. Tax collections will continue to increase in subsequent months.

-  Amount collected as of June 30, 2020
-  Amount collected at fiscal year end

OCCUPATIONAL TAX CERTIFICATES ISSUED



ABOUT

Occupational tax certificates are issued to commercial, retail and home based businesses. Fees are determined by type of business and gross receipts.



Total number of certificates issued

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

Very helpful with a lot of information that I did not know.

Jose T.

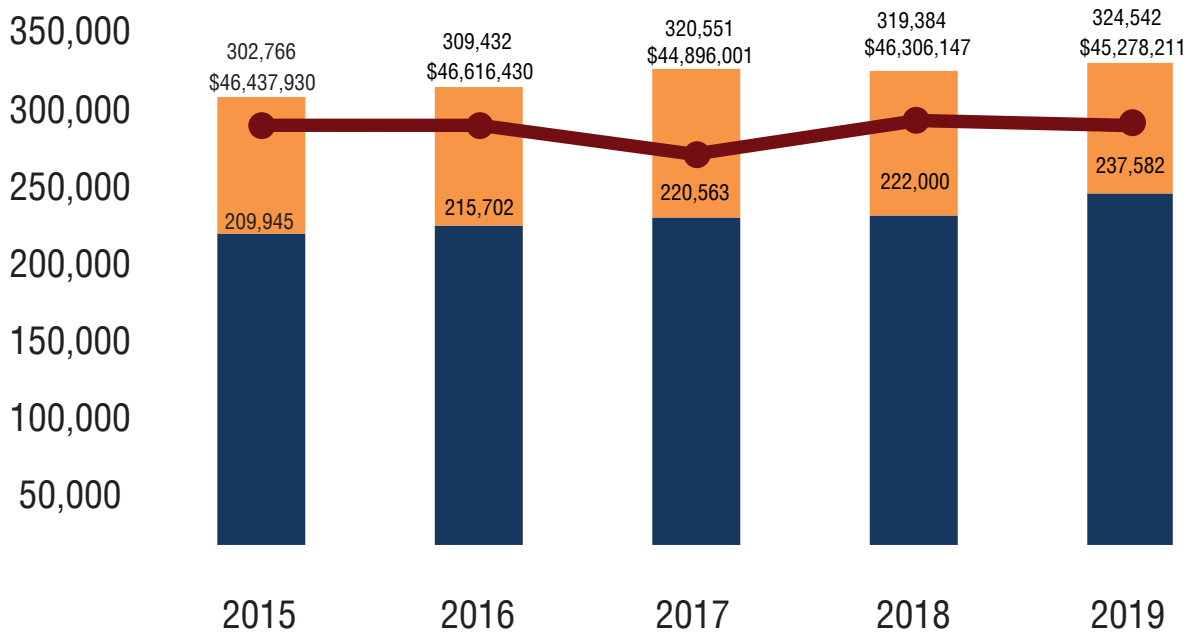
CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

Very efficient. Thanks so much for prompt service.

S. Chan





ANNUAL MOTOR VEHICLE TRANSACTIONS



ABOUT

The amount of total revenue collected remained steady the fourth full year under Title Ad Valorem Tax (TAVT). Under the TAVT system, the county collects the full amount of each TAVT transaction, although only a small portion is distributed to the county, while the remaining balance goes to the State.

 Total motor vehicle transactions. Includes multiple services performed by clerks involving processing motor vehicle tags, titles and documents

 Total number of transactions where tags were issued either through renewals or the issuance of new plates

 Total Revenue Collected

IMPORTANT DATES

MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION DATES

- Motor vehicle registration expires at midnight on the **(first) titled owner's birthday**
- Business or enterprise registrations expire at midnight on the **last day of the month** shown on the license plate or the decal
- Leased vehicles are registered by the **lessee's** birthday

PROPERTY TAX DATES

- **January 1- April 1:** Property tax returns accepted (in the Tax Assessor's office), Applications for Freeport and special land exemptions accepted (in the Tax Assessor's office)
- **April 1:** Deadline for filing homestead exemption for the current tax year (applications are accepted year round).
- **April 1:** Personal Property Mobile Home taxes due.
- **April 21:** Assessment notices mailed by the Tax Assessor's Office.
- **September 16:** Tax bills mailed to property owners.
- **November 16:** Deadline for property tax payment.

OCCUPATIONAL TAX/BUSINESS LICENSES

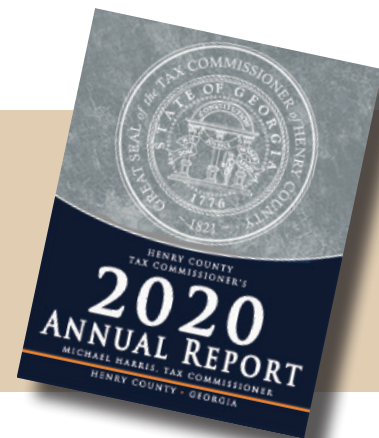
- **January 1:** Renewals are due

INTEREST & PENALTY DATES

- **February 17:** Liens (Fifa's) filed on delinquent Property Tax Bills
- **March 16:** 5% Penalty applied on delinquent Property Tax Bills every 120 days with a maximum of a 20% penalty.
- **April 1:** 10% Penalty on Occupational Tax renewals
- **April 2:** 10% Penalty on delinquent mobile home bills
- **November 17:** Interest begins accruing on delinquent property tax bills

You may download the 2020 Annual Report, in electronic format, from the Henry County Tax Commissioner website:

www.henrytc.org





LOCATIONS & HOURS



MCDONOUGH OFFICE

140 Henry Parkway
McDonough, GA 30253
Tel: (770) 288-8180 • Fax: (770) 288-8190

Motor Vehicle/Tag Office Hours :

Monday-Friday - 8:30-4:30
(Please check website for updated information or changes)

Property Tax and Occupational Tax hours :

Monday-Friday - 8:30-4:30



STOCKBRIDGE OFFICE

164 Burke Street
Stockbridge, GA 30281
Tel: (770) 288-8180 • Fax: (770) 288-8189

Motor Vehicle/Tag Office Hours :

Monday-Friday - 8:30-4:30
(Please check website for updated information or changes)

Property Tax hours:

Monday-Friday - 8:30-4:30



KROGER - ELLENWOOD KIOSK

101 Fairview Road
Ellenwood, GA 30294

Kroger Hours :

Daily 5:00 am – 12:00 am



KROGER - MCDONOUGH KIOSK

301 Jonesboro Road
MCDonough, GA 30253

Kroger Hours :

Daily 5:00 am – 12:00 am

OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

This year our office faced several operational challenges, but none more daunting than the COVID crisis. Facing unprecedented health concerns and looming business interruptions, we've all had to look for new ways to conduct business in a manner that would minimize health risks while maintaining our high operational standards. Here at the Tax Commissioners office we were able to navigate through this in a variety of ways. With the health and safety of our customers and staff members being our priority, we implemented several initiatives:

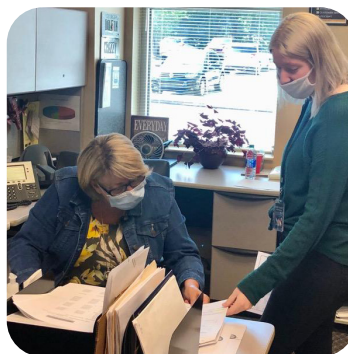
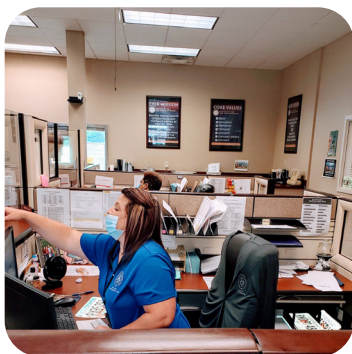
- Addition of plexiglass shielding at all front-facing staff locations
- Implemented new cleaning and sanitizing protocols
- Implementation of temperature screening and mask

wearing requirements at both office locations

We also launched an information campaign to inform customers of our various online and remote service options. Our efforts proved to be extremely successful as we saw tremendous increases in these services during the 8 weeks when our offices were closed to the public:

- On-Line Transactions: Increased by 120%
- Kiosk Transactions: Increased by over 400%

For all actions we've taken during this time, what I'm most proud of is the way the team here rose to the task each and every day, to face our challenges with professionalism, patience, compassion and encouragement for one another and the customers we serve.





NOTES

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HENRY COUNTY TAX COMMISSIONER
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