Chapter 7: Local Government in Georgia

QUICK NOTES

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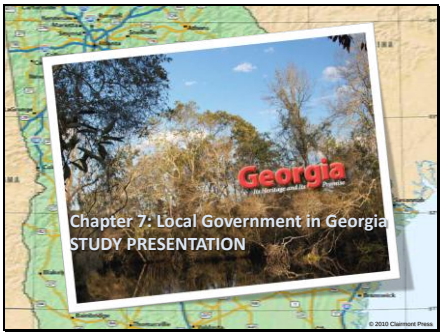

Slide 3

Section 1: County Government

- Essential Question:
  - What is the purpose of county government in the state of Georgia?

Slide 4

Section 1: County Government

- What terms do I need to know?
  - county
  - county seat
  - unincorporated area
  - ordinance
  - home rule
  - regional commissions

Slide 5

Origin of Georgia's Counties

- Georgia's Constitution of 1777 created the first eight counties of the state which lay along the coastal areas and the rivers.
- The earliest county structures in each **county** were a courthouse and a jail.
- Town with the courthouse became the **county seat**:
  - The site was important because people came there to pay taxes, record property deeds, and go to court.
  - It was the market center for trading, buying supplies, selling farm products, social gatherings, plus sharing news.
- Georgia has 159 counties – maximum number allowed by the Georgia Constitution.

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County Services

- County officials deal with basic state services and enforce state policies within county boundaries:
  - conduct Georgia's elections and voter registration
  - set up state courts and probate courts
  - administer public assistance (welfare)
  - build and maintain county roads
  - collect motor vehicle taxes and issue car tags
  - maintain property record;
  - carry out county health departments disease-prevention measures (vaccines, flu shots)

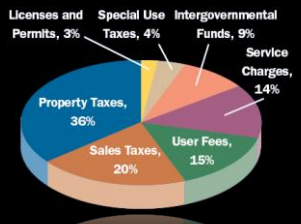
Slide 8

County Services

- County services are also provided to an **unincorporated area** (area of the county not included in any city boundary):
  - may be rural areas, farmland, wetlands, mountains or populated with neighborhoods, etc.
- The Georgia Constitution gives county governments the authority to provide municipal services such as:
  - police and fire protection
  - public health facilities and services
  - animal control
  - sewage collection and disposal
  - garbage collection
  - water utilities
  - parks, libraries
  - public transportation
  - terminal and dock facilities, etc.

Slide 9

Sources of Funding for Georgia's Counties



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County Officials

- Positions to be filled by elected officials (as specified in the Georgia constitution) are called "**constitutional officers**" and are elected to four-year terms:
  - sheriff
  - judge of the probate court
  - clerk of the superior court
  - tax commissioner (combined in most counties with a tax receiver and a tax collector)

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Regional Commissions

- The Georgia Department of Community Affairs was created to help local governments:
  - provides technical and research assistance
  - is the state's key agency in housing finance and development, comprehensive planning, and solid waste reduction
- There are 12 regional commissions:
  - range in size from 10 – 18 counties
  - help local governments with services that otherwise would not be able to staff, e.g., draw up plans for the county's future growth, write grants for historic preservation, etc.

Slide 12

Section 2: City Government and Special-Purpose Districts

- Essential Question:
  - Why are there different forms of local governments?

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Section 2: City Government and Special-Purpose Districts

- What terms do I need to know?
  - municipal corporation
  - incorporated
  - charter
  - strong mayor-council form
  - weak mayor-council form
  - council-manager form
  - consolidated government
  - special-purpose district
  - local independent authority
  - revenue bond

Slide 14

Georgia's First Cities

- The correct legal term for ***city*** is **municipal corporation** or **municipality** which has been incorporated (created) by the **Georgia legislature**:
  - Unlike counties, cities are formed at the request of the people living in a particular geographic area.
  - People formally petition the legislature for a **charter** (a written document giving a city the authority and fundamental law to exist and function) to become incorporated.
- The area wanting to be incorporated as a city:
  - must have at least **200 residents**; and
  - at least **60%** of its area must be divided into ***tracts*** (parcels of land) for various uses, i.e., residential, commercial, governmental, etc.

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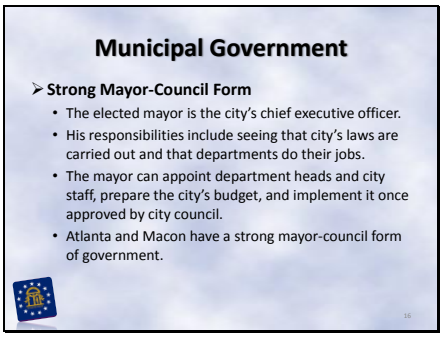

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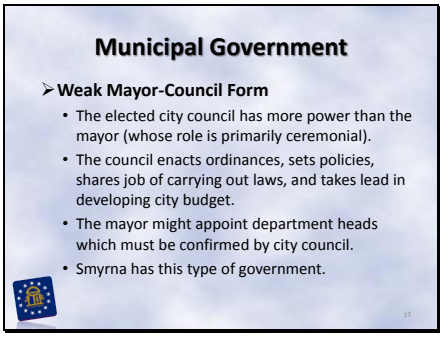

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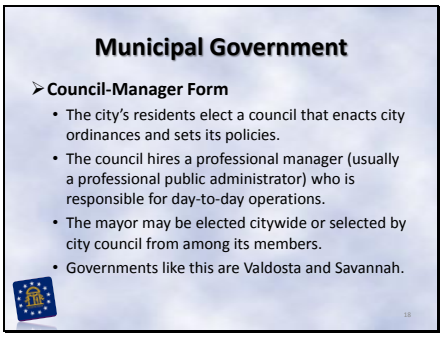

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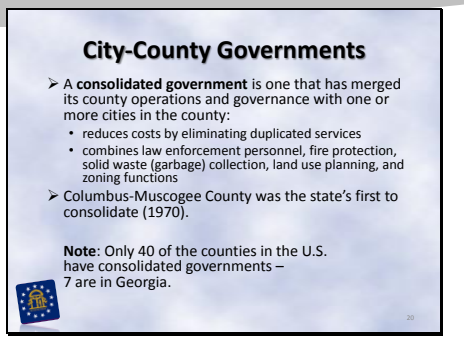

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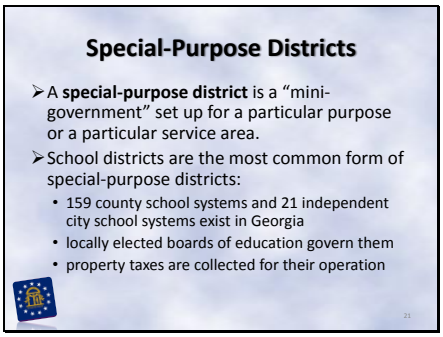

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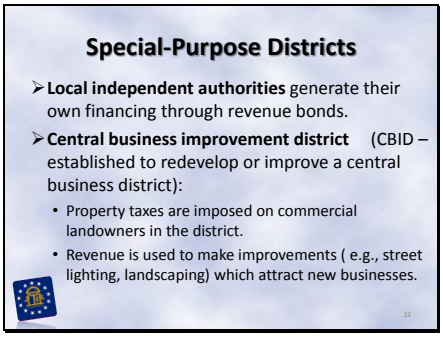

Additional Notes:

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