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**DEKALB COUNTY**

**W. Burrell Ellis, Jr.**  
Chief Executive Officer



**NEWS RELEASE**

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**JULY 20, 2009**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **STATEMENT FROM CEO ON THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

**DECATUR** – Today I met with senior members of the DeKalb Parks and Recreation Department to determine what actions led to 67 DeKalb County swimmers being denied participation by the Georgia Recreation and Parks Association (GRPA) in the state swim meet scheduled for July 24 and 25, 2009, and to discuss and review all possible actions the county can undertake to appeal that decision by GRPA.

I first became aware of GRPA's decision over the weekend and immediately directed my staff to provide a timeline of events. After reviewing the timeline and other information presented to my office by GRPA, it became clear that repeated failures of the DeKalb County Parks and Recreation Department to respond to written inquires and attend meetings led to the decision to deny participation in the state swim meet.

As a result, I have contacted each member of the GRPA requesting reconsideration of its decision and asking them not to penalize the DeKalb County swimmers because of the county's failure to take required administrative measures.

Additionally, I have taken the following actions:

1. I have terminated the employment of the Director of DeKalb County Parks and Recreation Department, effective immediately.
2. I have placed the Acting Deputy Director of Recreation Services on paid administrative leave, pending further investigation.
3. I have directed the COO to begin an immediate search for a new Director of Parks and Recreation.
4. I have directed the Deputy COO to begin an immediate review of the department and to provide a comprehensive study and strategic operational plan within 60 days.

On behalf of DeKalb County, I apologize to the swimmers and their families who have worked so hard and had hoped to participate in the state swim meet. As CEO, I will do everything within my power to seek GRPA's reconsideration.

**(MORE)**

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It is my objective to ensure that this never occurs again within any department of DeKalb County government and that DeKalb County operates in a manner that efficiently and responsively serves its citizens.

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