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Reed speaks at Buckhead Business Association lunch

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Kasim Reed

For the first time since he took office a little more than six months ago, Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed addressed the Buckhead Business Association at its quarterly luncheon Thursday at 103 West in Buckhead.

Reed talked about major points of the fiscal 2011 budget, which went into effect July 1, and the state of the city's finances.

"\$11 million of the budget will be invested in streets and improvements," he said of the \$559 million budget. "I don't want anyone out there to believe we're layering these things on top of fat."

Reed also mentioned the provision of 100 new police officers and a pay increase for public safety officers.

"As I stand here today, the city of Atlanta has 1,850 officers — 150 officers away from the 2,000-officer mark that people have been talking about in the city of Atlanta for more than a decade," he said.

Reed also gave examples of how city government has increased its efficiency since he took office.

"When I became mayor, the trash collection time proudly was 85 percent. The only problem is that left 8,000 to 10,000 people mad," he said. "We now have in my office, a computer that monitors the trash collection time ... I'm pleased to that our trash pick up rate is now 99.2 percent."

In bringing up the state Legislature's recent passage of House Bill 277 or the transportation bill, Reed said he was committed to seeing Buckhead get its portion of benefit from the bill.

"I believe that there are critical infrastructure improvements that Buckhead needs right now," he said. "And no bill or part of HB 227 will be passed without some significant improvements for Buckhead infrastructure in order to improve the traffic flow that you all have long been waiting for."

While discussing the state transportation bill, Reed said he thought more important than the political success of the bill was how it changed the dynamics of local and state governments.

"It is huge in terms of changing the conversation of the tired old arguments of Atlanta versus the Capitol and urban versus rural," he said.

After his speech, association president Heather Wright said her organization was willing to help.

"I think I can safely say that the people in this room are not going to let Buckhead get out of the city," she said, referring to a group's efforts to incorporate Buckhead. "People in this room want to see this city be the phoenix that it is for the South. We're with you."

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