

 Editor [Michael Stone](#) [michael.stone@patch.com](mailto:michael.stone@patch.com)

[Admin](#)



Like 617

[Nearby](#)

[Michael Stone](#)

**WestCobbPatch**  42°

[Home](#)

[News](#)

[Events](#)

[Directory](#)

[Pics & Clips](#)

[Elections](#)

[Real Estate](#)

[More Stuff](#)



Hey Michael Stone! 1 contributions need approval

[Moderate](#)

[Recent Contributions](#)

[Write](#)

[Edit](#)

[Deploy Notes](#)

Article updated.

[Government](#), [The Neighborhood Files](#)

## A Paulding ZIP Code in a Cobb World

There are more than 200 developed properties, most of which are residential, that have Hiram addresses but are across the county line.

By [Michael Stone](#) | [Email the author](#) | April 25, 2011

Recommend 0

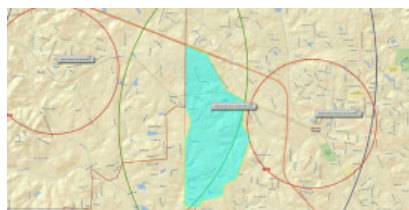
Tweet 0

[Email](#)

[Print](#)

[7 Comments](#)

**Related Topics:** [Postal Service](#), [Powder Springs City Council](#), [Powder Springs Government](#), and [Zip Code](#)



He had a Cobb ZIP code when he lived in Paulding County, and three years ago, when he actually moved to Cobb, his ZIP changed to a Paulding code.

Before relocating, Johnnie Purify wasn't aware of the possible complications presented by living in a city that has another city's—and especially county's—ZIP code. But since then, he said he has learned more about the issue than he ever thought he would.

"We were totally unaware of the infraction it would cause on our life," said the husband and father of three.

Purify lives in the relatively new and small Woodberry Farms subdivision in Powder Springs near the Paulding County line. He has been spearheading an effort to get the U.S. Postal Service to reorganize the area's ZIP codes.

He wants Powder Springs' 30127 to be paired with the sections of the city and unincorporated Cobb County that are covered by Hiram's 30141 boundaries that jut over from Paulding.

And he said he's not alone: "All my neighbors have incurred some hardship with it and are onboard."

Purify approached the [City Council](#) at its April 13 work session to ask members to petition the Postal Service to start what's called the "ZIP Code Boundary Review Process."

"I'm asking for leverage of the Powder Springs name to get this done," he said, later adding, "Because if it comes from me, I'm just one person. If it comes from Powder Springs, well it gives it a bit more weight."

Mayor Pat Vaughn said she's tried to tackle this issue before for the Warren Creek subdivision and that Purify has the city's backing.

"We're definitely on your side," Vaughn said at the work session, when council members agreed to move forward with the petition.

### Potential Predicaments

Purify, a 43-year-old veteran of the Air Force, is a regional water quality data manager for the Environmental Protection Agency and, within that role,

works with geography. He mapped out the requested area, which totals 1.76 square miles.

The area he is targeting doesn't include the portion of the 30127 ZIP code that basically does the opposite of 30141—stretches into Paulding from Cobb.

Powder Springs [Community Development](#) Director Pam Conner said within the 1.76 square miles, there are 313 land lots, 226 of which are developed.

"That (226) does include a couple businesses and a church," she said, "but the others are residential properties."

Some of the issues Purify and others across the country have reported having complications from their ZIP not matching their residency include:

- Paying taxes
- Insurance rates that vary in price depending on ZIP code
- Varying county sales tax rates (Paulding's is 7 percent, while Cobb's is 6)
- Confusion on where to vote
- State sales tax rebates to cities based on businesses within ZIP codes
- Home values
- Being located by GPS systems
- Jury duty
- Emergency services potentially being thrown off

The last item on the above list perhaps brings about Purify's biggest qualm. Though a police officer was able to double-check that his line would go to Cobb dispatch, he still worries that others may be affected.

As someone who frequently travels, he wanted to be sure his family would receive help during emergency situations. And if it was up to one of his children to explain that they live in Cobb despite their ZIP code, the response time might increase.

"For any type of emergency, they would not be able to explain that situation like I am to you," he said.

Interim Powder Springs police Chief Maj. Tom Arnold said he is just learning about the situation. But, he added, the department is familiar with which areas they should be covering despite ZIP codes.

"The guys working the roads, they know what those areas are," he said at [Thursday's town hall meeting](#).

Responders will be dispatched to an emergency, he said, even if double, triple or quadruple efforts are done by agencies in Powder Springs, Hiram and Cobb and Paulding counties.

One entity that some might think is affected by ZIP code boundaries not matching up with cities is the U.S. Census Bureau.

"ZIP codes don't really matter to us," said Nancy Bechler, a geographer for the Census Bureau's Atlanta office. "We don't look at the address; we look at where the house is located."

Bechler said her organization works with local governments—not the Postal Service—to make sure census maps are up to date.

#### **A ZIP Code's Sole Purpose: Postal Delivery**

Changing ZIP (Zone Improvement Plan) code boundaries is a subject Michael Miles is quite familiar with. The Postal Service's Atlanta District spokesman said his company frequently receives questions about the subject from citizens, reporters, government officials and others.

Miles was at his post during the incorporation of several cities in Fulton County near Atlanta's city limits over the last decade.

And as those cities incorporated, citizens wanted their "last line of address"—city, state and ZIP—to reflect where they live. The Postal Service calls it "community identity."

"We get requests like that all the time," Miles said. "In some cases, they are honored; in some cases, they aren't."

The Postal Service has long said its ZIP code boundaries are there for one purpose: to section areas off in a way that leads to effective and accurate postal delivery. Meanwhile, other entities—local governments, car insurance agencies and more—use them in ways that matches ZIP codes with cities and counties.

[U.S. Rep. David Scott](#), a Democrat who represents Georgia's [13th district](#), wrote the Postal Service on Purify's behalf.

In a return letter, Atlanta District Manager Kate Wiley wrote: "I hope that it is understood that it would be far too costly to adjust ZIP codes in each area based on municipal tax collections, real estate or other non-regulated reasons that are not determined by factors such as mail volume, delivery area size, geographical location and topography. We will only alter delivery boundaries when they will minimally disrupt the Postal Service or improve our operations and/or services."

The letter, which is attached to this article, also lists reasons why ZIP code boundaries are set up where they are:

- Size of the local population
- Size and geographic features of the area
- Condition and number of lanes of the roads that serve the area
- Traffic patterns on the roads
- Future development in terms of housing, industry and businesses, and the timing of those developments
- Line of carrier travel possible to serve customers efficiently
- Relationship of any existing carrier delivery routes
- Capability of post offices to serve an area in terms of personnel and space

- Other unique conditions of an area which could affect mail delivery

Purify noted how [Powder Springs' post office](#) is closer to the affected area in Cobb than the post office in Hiram.

"There is no way in God's green earth that the Hiram post office is closer than that office," he said.

It's about a nine-minute, 5 1/2 mile drive to get to the approximate center of the 1.76-square-mile area from Hiram's post office, Mapquest shows. From the office in Powder Springs, it's roughly a four-minute, 2-mile drive.

As mentioned in Wiley's return letter, Miles said that the distance from a mailbox to a post office isn't the only factor that goes into figuring out which locations should be paired with which post offices. He explained that the denser an area's population is, the more stops and roads a mail carrier would encounter in a smaller area.

When formal requests are made to change ZIP code classifications, boundaries are analyzed, and if economically feasible or beneficial, are changed, Miles said. After all, he added, the Postal Service is a business with no government funding, so any cost-savers are welcomed.

"ZIP codes were created for the processing and distribution of mail," he said. "But when we get requests for changes ... without negatively affecting operations, we will honor the request."

### **Situation Becoming 'More Common'**

The Congressional Research Service, which researches policies for U.S. senators and representatives, released a report in May 2008 called "Changing Postal ZIP Code Boundaries." It gives some background and details perspectives of both citizens and the Postal Service.

Larger cities were divided into "delivery zones" in 1943 by inserting two digits between the city and state in addresses, the report says. The whole country was divided into five-digit postal delivery codes that correspond to post offices in 1963.

"Because ZIP Codes are based on the location of delivery post offices, they often do not correspond to political jurisdiction boundaries," the report reads. "This means that millions of Americans receive their mail from post offices in adjacent towns, villages or neighborhoods."

The report adds: "This situation was not uncommon when ZIP codes were first assigned 40 years ago, and it has become more common since then—particularly in rapidly growing suburban areas."

An example the report gives is Haddon Township, an incorporated city in New Jersey without a post office. The city's municipal building has a Westmont, NJ address, and its residents receive mail from six different post offices.

Three 1990 bills that would allow local governments to establish ZIP code boundaries weren't passed. A survey by the Postal Service, which opposed the bills, showed that more than 11 million delivery points were served by carriers who cross city boundaries, the report says.

The survey estimated that "if delivery boundaries were realigned to match municipal boundaries, 1,600 new postal facilities and 10,500 new carriers would be needed," the report reads.

Government officials did ask the Postal Service in 1990, though, to make better efforts to resolve ZIP code conflicts, and if it couldn't, explain why. Since then, the organization has been progressive in both areas, the report says.

The report describes one related bill that did eventually pass: the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006. It mandated that the Postal Service match ZIP codes up with four towns—two in California, one in Ohio, and one in South Carolina.

But overall, the report says, there is typically little government officials can do because of the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, which includes protections from political actions.

### **Looking Ahead**

Those over individual post offices—called postmasters—don't make decisions on adjustments to ZIP code boundaries; it's instead up to district managers.

They "review requests for boundary adjustments to evaluate costs and benefits of alternative solutions to identified problems," the Congressional Research Service report reads.

Within 60 days of receiving the request to review the 30127 and 30141 ZIP code boundaries, the Postal Service must provide a response.

If the request is granted, "we can begin to enjoy all the community affiliations and identity the 30127 ZIP code provides to those who live and play in Powder Springs and Cobb County," Purify said.

If the request is denied, there is an option to appeal to Postal Service headquarters.

There is one alternative to redrawing boundaries: allowing both Hiram and Powder Springs to precede the 30141 ZIP code. From this, an envelope could read: "Powder Springs, GA 30141."

"This can help with community identity problems, though not with problems such as insurance rates or tax remittances being directed by ZIP Code," the report reads.

Modern technology has allowed for two cities to be paired with a single ZIP code. The report says: "When a large portion of the mail was sorted manually, this option could have caused mis-sorting and delayed mail, but today almost all mail is sorted by computer."

Councilwoman Cheryl Sarvis said this is an option she could side with.

"To me, the big issue is not so much what the ZIP code is, but what the city name is," she said after the [last City Council meeting](#). "When they go to buy a car, they have to pay Paulding County (sales) taxes even though they pay taxes to Cobb County. It's awful."

Purify knows that both switching ZIP codes and being able to put Powder Springs before 30141 are possible resolutions. But the former option—which would lead to him having the same city and ZIP identification as most Powder Springs residents—is what he's pushing for most.

"For the unaffected, this problem has no meaning at all," he said. "But for those of us who live on this fantasy island called 30141 ... the true community comfort and feeling is lost in the ZIP code boundary line."

[Email me updates about this story.](#)

[Keep me posted](#)

[Recommend](#) 0

[Tweet](#) 0

[Email](#)

[Print](#)

[Follow comments](#)

[Submit tip](#)

[Edit photos & video](#)

[7 Comments](#)

**Henry L Lust**

[Delete](#)

12:01 pm on Tuesday, April 26, 2011

I echo all of the frustration expressed by Mr Purify and fully support the request to make this right for those of us paying Cobb County and Powder Springs taxes. It's just not right!

Henry L Lust  
Woodberry Farm Ln  
Powder Springs, GA ... with Hiram, GA mailing address ...

[Reply](#)

**Sheryl Shields**

[Delete](#)

9:31 pm on Tuesday, April 26, 2011

As a resident of Warren Creek subdivision, located beside Woodbury Farm, we have experienced many of the difficulties and anguish as presented by Mr. Purify. The homeowners in our community have tried to remedy this issue many times over the past 11 years that we have lived here. We have had the political support of several Senators and Congressmen. At one point, an effort was made to include this change in the presentation of a bill through Congressman Phillip Gingrey, all to no avail. While I can certainly understand how the US Postal Service organizes the delivery of mail through its distribution locations that they feel are most appropriate, it seems that little thought is given to the hardships that are caused to the homeowners in its residences. Therefore, I am in full support to reorganize or rectify the mailing address to Powder Springs 30127.

Sheryl Shields  
Warren Creek Drive  
Proud resident of Powder Springs, Cobb County with a Paulding County Hiram zip

[Reply](#)

**Doug R**

[Delete](#)

9:41 pm on Tuesday, April 26, 2011

I completely agree with Mr. Purify's concerns. My neighborhood is located in this problem area and I have encountered similar issues. For example, recently, my entire neighborhood did not receive a census form. I had to make a special request because of the confusion between Paulding County and Powder Springs. It's just absurd.

Doug R.

[Reply](#)

**A. Johnson**

[Delete](#)

12:15 pm on Friday, April 29, 2011

As a resident of Cameron Springs here in "Hiram Springs" I am also extremely frustrated with the zip code situation! My neighborhood is located in this problem area and I have encountered similar issues as the residents in Woodberry Farms and others. I am in full support to reorganize or rectify the mailing address to Powder Springs 30127.

A. Johnson  
Cameron Springs Subdivision

[Reply](#)

**D Fre....**

10:36 pm on Saturday, July 14, 2012

Delete

I am planning on buying a great home off Brownsville Rd near Hwy 92. According to the address, my child will attend a Paulding county school...or will she?I am also concerned about my ability to utilize the benefit of my Georgia Work Ready Certificate to work in Paulding county while the home is zoned for being located in Cobb county!! Should I reconsider buying there.....under these circumstances??

Reply

**JD Purify**

Delete

5:39 pm on Tuesday, October 2, 2012

Information meeting is tonight Oct. 2 at the Ford Center from 6-8 PM.

Reply

**JD Purify**

Delete

9:22 pm on Tuesday, October 2, 2012

Had alot of miss information on home values dropping if the change is made to move from 30141 to 30127. So, I checked with a popular web site on the Home Price and Value for 30141: [http://www.zillow.com/local-info/GA-30141-home-value/r\\_70914/](http://www.zillow.com/local-info/GA-30141-home-value/r_70914/)

and then I looked at home prices for 30127: [http://www.zillow.com/local-info/GA-30127-home-value/r\\_70904/](http://www.zillow.com/local-info/GA-30127-home-value/r_70904/)

Homes in 30141 are down from \$146K in 2007 to \$88,200 in 2012 and homes in 30127 are down from \$162K in 2007 to \$102,100 in 2012. So, both zip codes are down, but homes in 30127 fell from a much higher home value and have maintained a higher home value over all.

Reply

**Leave a comment**

Send me email updates for this article

Submit



**Sponsored Links**

**Coffee Bean That Burns Fat?**

Tennessee: celebrity doctor uncovers his #1 way to burn fat fast.  
LiveHealthyDigest.com

**WeightWatchers.com**

Visit the official site to learn how to lose weight & keep it off.  
www.WeightWatchers.com



**\$10,000 Poker Tournament**

Play Free Poker. Win Real Cash. No credit cards. No entry fees.  
www.pureplay.com



### Advertise

Advertise on Patch and reach potential customers in your backyard and beyond. Click here for more information.

[Learn more »](#)

### Volunteer

If you want to help local causes, or your cause needs local help, your next click should be right here.

[Learn more »](#)

### Contribute

- [Send us news tips](#)
- [Put an event on the calendar](#)
- [Announce something to everyone](#)

---

#### Patch Info

- [About Us](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [About Our Ads](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)
- [Privacy Policy - UPDATED](#)

#### Get in Touch

- [Go Patch!](#)
- [Help](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Patch Blog](#)

#### Patch Initiatives

- [PatchU](#)

#### Goodies

- [Patch Newsletter](#)
- [Widgets](#)



Copyright © 2012 Patch. All Rights Reserved.